

**THE IDEA OF THE INEXPRESSIBLE**  
**A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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**REDISCOVERING INDIA**

**IDEA OF THE  
INEXPRESSIBLE**

A Philosophical Analysis

**MOHAPATRA A.R.**



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## TO MY MOTHER

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“My ears open to hear, my eyes to see,  
This light within my spirit that shines beyond,  
My mind with its thoughts in the distance,  
What shall I speak, and what verily shall I think ?”  
(Rg. Veda—VI 9-6).

that we cannot speak about,  
must consign to silence”.  
(Wittgenstein, L.—Tractatus 7)



## PREFACE

This work is an attempt at an analysis of the ideas of the inexpressible in different areas of Philosophy. Questions of the nature of language become primary consideration when concerned with the idea of inexpressibility. An idea is inexpressible, I think, in the sense that it is not adequately, completely and exactly expressed or communicated through our language. This idea is related to the idea of the indistinct and indefinite. I have attempted to analyse the different problems which are connected with the notion of the inexpressible in the Philosophy.

In the introduction of *Tractatus*, Russell stated that Wittgenstein's entire Philosophy is inexpressible. More or less I have referred Wittgenstein, from that point of view, considering him to be the central point of my whole work.

I wish to acknowledge and convey my heartfelt thanks to those who have directly or indirectly rendered indispensable assistance and advice in my work. But my words fail, feelings fumble and ideas reel back to express my gratefulness because of inexpressibility.

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A.R. MOHAPATRA

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Problem and meaning

Language has become one of Philosophy's most important and pressing themes during this century. This preoccupation with language has its origins in the most diverse areas of philosophical inquiry. Philosophical attention has sometimes concentrated so exclusively on language that it has simply been identified with linguistic analysis. Linguistic philosophy consists in the attempt to solve philosophical problems by analysing the meanings of words, propositions, verification, speech acts etc. Much of the work has been done so far by the modern philosophers and scholars over this subject matter, but the very basic problem of language has remained untouched.

I think, in Philosophy the problem of inexpressibility becomes a very deep and fundamental problem.

As like other philosophical terms, it is very difficult to define the term 'inexpressible'. It may not be possible to give a precise and definite meaning to this relative term. I think it has more than one meaning which is used in different senses. But my observation here is that the 'inexpressible' notion is not complete

silence. The inexpressible may be made manifest in utterance. When one utters something that may not be the complete expression of a fact. For example, when one person expressing a particular fact e.g., X, may not be capable of giving a complete analysis of the accurate facts of X. The expression of any fact is always incomplete and inadequate. Our knowledge is always incomplete and inadequate, we look further and further without exhausting it. As a matter of fact we cannot communicate a complete fact as a whole to others.

But generally it has been held by some philosophers that some things are inexpressible or uncommunicable or ineffable. By this it has usually been meant that there are facts or state of affairs, actual or possible, which cannot be linguistically expressed or put into words.

Language as a form of expression is alright for practical purposes and in its practical application, but when it is stretched beyond its legitimate limit a strain is put on it from various metaphysical or speculative angles and it simply breaks down; it can no longer perform its normal functions. Our vocabulary is too limited to express what we wish to express. Besides words are also deficient in power of expression, especially in expression of quality. No verbal statement is a perfectly adequate expression of a fact. Thus language is inadequately adequate.

I have attempted to study some of the causes of inexpressibility in different fields of Philosophy. Generally inexpressibility is due to insufficient language and symbol, inadequate expression, nonsense and abstract ideas, emotive and subjective feeling, metaphysical and transcendent facts, mystical and aesthetical feeling and last but not least the unclarity of thought and ideas. I have made an attempt to discuss the above issues in the various chapters of mywork.

I have used the general approach as well as the method of analysis. Analytical Philosophy seems to be the dominant trend of today. My problem of inexpressibility is a new addition to the Philosophy of language. Although I am convinced that

analysis alone is insufficient to explain and solve this problem, and in certain cases it is also inadequate like the problem of inexpressibility itself.

I have made an attempt to reconstruct Wittgenstein's thought with regard both to its content and also the general structure of the argument. Needless to say, I have not attempted to discuss everything, but I believe that what I have chosen is central to the content and significance of his work. This problem (work) is confined to the language of religion, ethics, aesthetics and philosophy of language.

I must here clarify one point regarding the discussion of the chapters. Since the whole of the present study centres around the single concept e.g. inexpressibility, there is bound to exist an intimate relation between various levels of discussion.

## **1.2 Brief survey and outlines**

This work is divided into seven Chapters.

Chapter I consists of the introduction where I have mentioned the meaning of the inexpressible in different senses. I have also given a brief outline of the work, considering it to be a fundamental issue in Philosophy of language.

Chapter II is devoted to religious language in Indian Philosophy. I have attempted to discuss the Indian notion of religious language. Here my analysis is confined to the nature of religious language, religious language in Vedānta and Upanishads, Mādhyamika Buddhism, Nyāya Vaiśeṣika systems and Syādvāda of Jainism.

In advaita Vedānta Brahman is without any characteristic and unknowable through our discursive thought. It maintains that the highest reality transcends the words and language. So also in Mādhyamika Buddhism the ultimate truth cannot be grasped by language. All phenomena are indeterminable and inexpressible. In the Nyāya system I believe that the sense perception is, in principle, beyond designation in language. Without such a designation words become without conception, verbalization and

hence communication through language would be impossible..

In the Chapter III, I have discussed the western views of the nature of religious language. There it attempts to explain the mysticism : a scientific and psychological analysis, the mystical aspects of Wittgenstein's Philosophy, Plato's and Tillich's metaphysical doctrine, the analysis of God in religious language, then the problem of God's existence, and lastly Wittgenstein's conception of God. I have made an attempt to analyse mysticism from a scientific and psychological point of view and my discussion mainly focussed Wittgenstein, Russell, William James and W. T. Stace. I then discuss God as the central figure in the analysis of religious language. Here I have discussed the question whether God is a proper name or not? The next question about God is whether it can be used as descriptive predicable term or not? My suggestion here is that God is neither a proper name nor a descriptive predicative term but an abstract term. Then I have made an attempt to discuss the controversial problem of the existence of God, from the analytical and reflective point of view. My analysis of God covers mainly the four points viz., (1) Meaningfulness; (2) Empirical Atheism (3) Empirical Theism and (4) Neo-classical Theism. Lastly I have examined the conception of God, according to Wittgenstein.

Chapter IV deals with moral and ethical language. It attempts to describe the emotive theory, emotive meaning and the concept of good according to Plato, Kant, Hume, G. E. Moore and Wittgenstein. In the appendix I of this chapter I have stated the Indian notion of moral language.

I have analysed the concept of good, according to Plato, Kant, Hume, Moore and Wittgenstein. Plato's ideas of good, Kant's concept of highest good (Summum bonum), Hume's emotivistic non-rational concept of good, Moore's indefinable notion of good and last but not the least Wittgenstein's transcendental ethics are put together and a conclusion that the concept of good is inexpressible and indefinable.

In the appendix I to this chapter, I have stated briefly how



the four human values e.g. Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa are the subject matters of our problem.

In the V Chapter of my work, "Analysis of Aesthetic Language", I have discussed the following:

- (a) Art and feeling;
- (b) Art as a symbol;
- (c) Problems in aesthetics expression;
- (d) Transcendental aesthetics and in the appendix II, the Indian notion of aesthetical language.

All works of art express forms of feeling. Language cannot reproduce the feeling that works of art express and evoke. Every piece of art has some feeling and emotion, which is the meaning of that art. Language is not adequate to name a particular feeling of an art. This sort of problem is always there in the art, according to Dewey, Langer and Prall.

The work of art is a symbol of human feeling. What is inexpressible in the discursive symbolism of language is subjective experience, emotion and feeling. Non-discursive symbol of Mrs. Langer has no vocabulary. Thus what art expresses is not actual feeling but ideas of feeling.

In the problem of aesthetic expression I have made an attempt to analyse the expression of art from the expression of artist. Art is the expression of emotion. Art is a vision or intuition. So how does art communicate.

Aesthetic experience is no doubt personal and private, and no personal and private experience can ever literally be communicated to anyone else.

In the transcendental aesthetic, I have tried to discuss Kant, Hegel and Wittgenstein. Aesthetic experience, according to Kant, is experience of harmony between free imagination and free understanding. It is purely subjective and universally valid. Aesthetic is the science of sensible knowledge i.e. knowledge that sensibility yields. Sensuous knowledge of art is intuitive knowledge. In the transcendental aesthetic, we find two forms

of *a priori* knowledge—space and time, which Kant called the forms of intuition. Aesthetic ideas cannot be made completely intelligible by language. In case of creation of art, free imagination which constitutes the soul of art, cannot therefore, be adequately presented in language.

According to Hegel, aesthetic is the science of sensation of feeling. To Hegel, art is the sensuous presentation of absolute. Art is the presentation of truth or spiritual reality in sensuous form.

Wittgenstein says that ethics and aesthetics are one. Both are used in absolute sense. One cannot estimate any essential characteristics of 'beautiful' or 'ugly' things. In art (music) we get certain images, organic feeling, emotion and impression etc. but we still do not know how to analyse this impression. Aesthetic is transcendental and higher. Hence proposition of aesthetic is concerned with what cannot be said, because they do not state facts, according to Wittgenstein.

In the appendix II to this chapter, I have attempted to study the Indian notion of aesthetic, particularly with reference to my topic. Here I examine the vedāntic notion of aesthetic and Indian theories of Rasa and Bhāva according to Bhārata and Prof. Barlingay. Brahman is consciousness and bliss. Bliss and beauty are identical, because in Brahma experience there is no distinction of aesthetic object and aesthetic delight. Rāmānuja's system of tattava, hita and puruṣārtha, may be adopted in the study of aesthetics as well. Indian aestheticians viz., Ānanda-varḍana, Abhinava-gupta, Bhārata and Prof. Barlingay, have related their aesthetics with the problem of inadequacy of language.

Chapter VI is concerned with the philosophy of language. Here I have discussed the private language, problem of communication, the limits of my language mean the limits of my world (Tractatus 5.6), what cannot be shown, cannot be said (Tractatus 4.12.12), what we cannot speak about we must consign to silence (Tractatus 7). All these discussions and interpretations are in the light of my thesis. In the private language argument, I

mainly focussed on Wittgenstein, I think, private experience of Wittgenstein leads to solipsism. In the private language arguments I have referred mainly to Malcolm, Castaneda and Ayer. It seems to me that there is no private language, but private sensation and feeling. We cannot communicate our personal feelings and sensations.

In the problem of communication I have raised the question and discussed how we can make ourselves understood by means of language? No two people have the same thought corresponding to the same word.

Then I have analysed the three most important propositions of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. The first proposition 5.6 'my language and my world' implicitly introduces the notion of solipsism. Here Wittgenstein identifies language with my language and world with my world and the latter with the subject.

For what the solipsist means is quite correct, only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest. The second proposition (*Tractatus* 4.12.12.) becomes the truth of solipsism. Here I have analysed how Wittgenstein uses the word 'show' (*Zeigen*) in two different senses: in one sense of 'show' sentences say what they show, in another they cannot say what they 'show'. This 'shown' of Wittgenstein is mystical and cannot be put into words. But here my argument is that when mystical things cannot be put into words, then it cannot be shown. The last proposition (*Tractatus* 7) is the whole summary of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. 'Silence' here, according to my interpretation is not complete silence in the ordinary sense of not uttering anything. Wittgenstein's inexpressible doctrine holds that which is really important cannot be said due to lack of clarity and failure to understand the logic of our language.

Chapter VII is the conclusion of my work. Here I have made an attempt to show in brief the important results of my interpretation. Finally I attempt to offer a few general remarks regarding the basic theme of the work as a whole.

## RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

### 2.1 Nature of religious language

In recent years, critical inquiry into the relation between language and philosophy has progressed very much. Alongwith Philosophy and Science religion has been one of the dominant concerns of mankind. Religion may be regarded as a subjective valuation of life and becomes the realization or feeling or something above and beyond.

Utterances made in religious contexts are of many sorts, in the performance of public and private worship, Prayers, Prables, Praise, Petition, Conversion and so on. In sacred writings we find historical records, dramatic narratives, proclamations of law, theological pronouncements etc. In devotional literature e.g. Vedas, Upanishads and Purānas, we observe that there are rules of conduct, way of life, biographical narratives and introspective descriptions of religious experience.

Inspite of the wealth of its forms of expression religious language is less well defined and less in possession of clear principles of unity than most other branches of Philosophy. One of the most important novel element in Philosophy, or

religion is that of analysis of religious language. This concern stems from the wider philosophic study of the use and meaning of language. Turning from the idea that the objective of Philosophy is to create a unified system of world view many philosophers in recent times have undertaken the quite different effort of analysing the usages of religious language. Development of this area has progressed swiftly in recent decades.

Language in every distinct area has its own peculiar usages and the realm of religion is no exception. The analysis of religious language has gone beyond theological statements, although these too are included in the effort to understand the nature and functions of religious language.

We agree with metaphysicians especially the upholders of the idealist traditions in their convictions that the empirical consciousness or the sense-bound thought cannot be the sole medium of our knowledge about reality, that there is a trans-empirical consciousness, capable of yielding intuition of reality which has no parallel in our empirical awareness. While speaking of this level of awareness, language in its literal mode functioning is a very inadequate rather, a distorting medium of communication. The most obvious problem is simply that much of traditional religious language fails to communicate anything to a large number of people and this is manifested in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is alleged that religious language is meaningless or that religion is irrelevant. Religious believers prefer to speak of a difficulty in understanding and ordinary people find it hard to make sense of religious doctrines. Now, in so far as these difficulties are difficulties of understanding, the question of concept of formation is highly relevant, for understanding and communicating is largely a matter of grasping concepts, and religious understanding is no exception. But it is not easy to form the concept of religion. No clear and definite concepts are available in religion, but each concept in religion carries different meanings and interpretations. The question of concept formation is relevant to that of verification,



since one can verify a statement only if one understands the concept being used and knows the conditions of their correct application. But no one can verify religious statements. Thus it is very difficult to describe or communicate religious concepts and statements.

Besides, language as a form of expression is alright for practical purposes and in its practical application, but when it is stretched beyond its legitimate limit and a strain is put on it from various metaphysical or speculative angles, then it simply breaks down, it cannot perform its normal functions.

Rudolf Otto holds that what is most distinctive in religion cannot be put into words. "This is the 'non-rational' part of religion, 'non-rational' he equates with 'not capable of being conceptualized'. The conceptualized part of religion, that is put into words is very important. But we, with our highly conceptualized religion, must not forget that there is something else which cannot be put into words."<sup>1</sup> Further he adds that religion is conceptualized merely by being put into words—any words. It is not conceptualized only because it is not put into hard or abstract words. But here my view is that religion being the subjective experience of a being, it cannot be conceptualized even though somehow or rather it is put into words. What Otto explicitly says cannot be conceptualized is the 'numinous experience.' In so far as the 'numinous experience' is an emotion it is not different from the other psychological emotions.

## 2.2 Religious language in advaita Vedānta and Upanishads

For the purpose of a philosophical analysis of religious language we select two important philosophers e.g. Śaṅkarācārya and Meister Eckhart and Western religion. Although Eckhart is a Western philosopher, his views are similar to advaita vedānta.

"As a Pure Being (esse) God is neither this nor that neither

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1. Otto, R., *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 3.

thus nor otherwise—Just as Brahman is Pure Being is ‘nirgūna’ and ‘neti neti’ (not this not this). Therefore, it is absolutely simple above all conceptions and conceptual differences and so, beyond all comprehending and apprehending. For our comprehension is beyond up with distinctions with genus and differtia specifica.”<sup>2</sup>

The Absolute or Brahman can thus be said to be a kind of Thing-in-itself or Being-in-itself, devoid of any specific characteristic or properties, because possessing any property means a kind of determination of the absolute being. Hence, there is a sense in saying that the Absolute is without forms and properties (Nāma-rūpa) as it transcends every determination (limitation) in order to maintain its comprehensiveness.

God (Brahman) says Eckhart ‘is a Void of Form, the Nameless, Nothing’<sup>3</sup> since God (Brahman) is Nothing. He is therefore not this kind of being nor that kind of being. He is neither this nor that. Thus all particular determinations, whether of material or spiritual nature, are denied of Him, and hence He is exclusive of all attributes.

According to Śaṅkarāchārya Brahman has neither name nor form, transcending merits and demerits, beyond time and space and the object of sense-experience, supreme, . . . beyond the Power of Speech to express. The Greek philosopher, Plotinus states that no form belongs to him, not even the intellect. Like Śaṅkarāchārya, Eckharts says it is free of all names and void of all forms, it is one and the simple and no one can in anyway behold it.

So also referring to God Rudolf Otto says “In the mystical states the mysterium is experienced in its essential, positive and specific character as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but its whole real nature he can

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2. Otto, R., *Mysticism East and West*, p. xvi.

3. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought.”<sup>4</sup>

If there is nothing real, there cannot be unreal also. Thus if everything is denied by Śaṅkara and Eckhart, and if something is not accepted as real, there is a possibility of falling into an absurd position of Nothingness (Śūnya), which will be untenable, because our experience presupposes the existence of something positive, without which even negation or denial becomes impossible. A negation by itself becomes meaningless, and has no existence without its corresponding affirmation. Negation presupposes an affirmation.

But Śaṅkarāchārya accepted both negative and positive aspects of the Brahman since Brahman both ‘is’ and ‘is not’ becomes a contradiction. Śaṅkara says there is the higher Brahman, who is qualityless, and the lower Brahman having qualities. For Śaṅkara, the qualityless Brahman alone is this true ultimate, the positive Brahman being no more than its first manifestation. He ascribes non-being as the negative or higher Brahman and Being as the lower positive Brahman. So there is no contradiction.

If we analyse Hinduism, we find a lot of negative characteristics of divine, which is real according to Śaṅkara. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad says “Brahman is soundless, formless, tasteless, odorless, colourless, undecaying, eternal, without physical attributes, without beginning, without end, beyond space, beyond time, is freed from the jaws of death” (Sec. III, verse 25). The Taittīrya Upaniṣad says, “He is beyond the senses, who is formless, inexpressible, beyond all predicates” (Sec. III, verse 2). In the Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad we find ‘that self is to be described by ‘No’, ‘No’. It is incomprehensible, for it cannot be comprehended’ (Sec. VIII, verse 38). The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad states that ‘That which cannot be seen or grasped, which has neither origin nor properties . . . which is eternal, all pervading—omnipresent and extremely subtle’—He is Brahman (Sec. I verse 4).

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4. Ibid., p. xvii.



We observe in the Kenopaniṣad that 'That which is not expressed through speech, but by which speech is expressed—know that as Brahman' (Sec. I, verse 5). In Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, 'Brahman is neither cognitive nor non-cognitive, which cannot be seen and cannot be described' (Sec. VII).<sup>5</sup> Thus in advaita Vedānta and Upaniṣads we observe that Brahman is unqualified and it is inexpressible.

This Pure Nothing is to be the highest, the end of all longing and desire. For it is the same with the two masters e. g. Śaṅkara and Eckhart, their halting attempts to describe by negations and contrast with the here and now.

In the later Advaita tradition, Madhusūdan Sarasvatī has argued in favour of the ineffability of Brahman as follows. He says, 'Brahman is without any 'dharma' or characteristic and unknowable (through our discursive thought) Bliss'. These words cannot express Brahman, for the cognitive for application of these words to denote Brahman does not exist.'<sup>6</sup>

Madhusūdan's elaborate discussion of the doctrine of ineffability is stated in the highly technical language of an Indian logician. It can be summarized as follows : The ground of applying a word to denote an object is according to the Indian semanticists a quality or a property of that object. A denoting word can be said to be 'grounded' in the quality of the object it denotes. Thus, an object cow is denoted by the word 'cow' because it has the quality of cowness. But since Brahman lacks any quality, no word can be used to denote Brahman. In other words, Brahman is ineffable or inexpressible'.<sup>7</sup>

This inexpressibility of Brahman can be interpreted mathematically.

Let me analyse now the concept of Zero in Advaita Vedānta

5. Sarma, D.S., *The Upanishads*, pp. 55, 102, 247, 15, 36, 95.

6. Madhusūdan Sarasvatī S., *Advaitasidhi* ed., by A.K. Sastri, p. 784.

7. Matilal, B.K., *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, p. 196 and 122.

Philosophy. Bhāskarāchārya, one of the greatest mathematicians of India stated in his book, *Bijaganita* "Zero multiplied by any number is zero. Zero divided by any number is zero. But any number divided by zero is termed Khahāra, (Infinity). If any number or infinite added to or taken away from this Khahāra, it remains unaltered. It is like the infinite Brahman without a second, which remains unaltered both by creation and absorption. Bhāskarāchārya has explained the mathematical idea of Advaita. He states that any number divided by zero is called Khahāra, a value which neither increases by addition nor decreases in value by subtraction. It has already been shown that infinity minus infinity continues to be infinity. It can also be shown that infinity + infinity or any finite quality is also infinity."<sup>8</sup> Anything which neither increases nor decreases, numerically, may be either 'Śūnya' or Nirgūna Brahman of Vedānta, which is ultimately inexpressible.

Here I like to add the conception of Śūnya Brahman of Lord Jagannath, of Puri. The most characteristic ideology behind the Lord Jagannath formulated by Panchasakhās, and Bhima Bhoi of Orissa, is the predominance of the concept of Śūnya. There can be no doubt that this fundamental concept of the Vajrāyana idea of the Void identifying it with the Vedāntic ideas of Nirgūna Brahman. Balarama Dāsh in the first chapter of his "Sārasvata Gitā" declares that 'Śūnya' and 'Brahman' are identical ideas and in his 'Sīdhanta Dambarū', he presents a 'Bijamantra' which reads 'Om' solution to Śūnya Brahman in its 'nirgūna' or real form it is conceived as the prime-mover behind all such manifestation.<sup>9</sup> This Śūnya as a supreme being i.e. Lord Jagannath, becomes inexpressible which is called Avyakta Pūrūsa Brahman, Nirākār Brahman and 'Anaskāra' Brahman (Purosattama Sanghita—Chapter I).<sup>10</sup>

8. Śankārāchārya, Sri, *Maya and Brahman*,—a mathematical interpretation p. 1-2.

9. Mishra, K.C., *The Cult of Jagannath*, p. 158.

10. Rathasarma, S., *Purosattama Yoga*, p. 6.

The Philosophy of Advaita Vedānta can be interpreted in the light of philosophical analysis 'Avaktavya' in Jainism is obtained by a conjoint-negation of 'is' and 'not is' or 'Syādavaktavyam' a thing is indescribable whereas 'anirvachaniya' in Advaita is the state where it is not possible to assert or deny the proposition as a whole, because what is to be can never be negated. If in a conjunctive negation, one term is not negated then the conjunctive affirmation will not be possible. Thus in Advaita all empirical propositions have twin values of truth and falsity and thus their conjoint affirmation or negation is not possible. We shall have to suspend our judgement and prepare ourselves for being able to assert what is true in isolation from what is both true and false. In the state of Brahman realisation, assertion of a purely true proposition is possible but in the empirical state one has to suspend assertion because all the propositions that are available have twin values.

Thus in the Advaita system, a proposition contains an element of truth but it cannot be asserted. 'Śaṅkara's contention here is that attribution as general characteristic goes counter to the uniqueness of the thing described. Description of a unique-particular by means of the universal or the general is 'avidyā'. His view is that language cannot represent the uniquely real. The true cognition according to him, consists in knowing the 'that' by 'thatness' alone and not by the 'what'. Language can give the *tatastha lakṣanas* and not the '*Svarūpa lakṣana*'.<sup>11</sup>

"Śaṅkara's logic corroborates and confirms the finding of his philosophy of language. His theory of meaning and his theory of propositions shows that all descriptive language is incomplete in sense and that identification propositions alone are self-complete in meaning. Accordingly, identity of the self is the final truth that discourse at best may imply. Since descriptive language is necessarily incomplete in meaning and since identification propositions alone can achieve this purpose, a non-quali-

11. Mishra, G., *Analytical Studies in Indian Philosophical Problems*, p. 6.

fied, self-identical Brahman is ultimately real. As this Brahman is known by means of a critique of language, Śaṅkara declares it to be 'Śabdāmūla'. Such a critique, according to him, reveals the falsificatory character of language and informs us negatively that all that language attributes to reality does not belong to it."<sup>12</sup>

The Philosophy of language of Śaṅkara gets further support from his logic and analysis of meaning. 'So aham Brahman, That Thou-At' or 'I am Brahman' are pure demonstratives. But when we apply descriptive language to it, we falsify his philosophy. Descriptive language, according to Śaṅkara, can never complete its sense. It takes the circuitous path of talking about one thing by talking of all other things. But we can never talk of all things at any time or we cannot even describe a fact completely. Our descriptive language, therefore, always remains incomplete. Language comes very near to its goal in identification statements. But pure identity can be reached only when language ceases to operate.

Śaṅkara's philosophy of language leads him to conclude that language necessarily falsifies the real. By an analysis of the nature and function of concepts, it reveals that reality cannot be represented in language. The generality of a concept is inadequate to represent the nature of the uniquely real. Language can give us only false knowledge or 'avidyā'.

One who realises the oneness of Brahman has to completely give up language. He has simply to stand and stare, mute and speechless (*Savkha avākka eva*). Thus Śaṅkara's logic leads him to the conclusion that language is incapable of representing the real, that the Brahman can be realised only in a state of pure speechless consciousness. All that we know about Brahman is that it is pure bliss (self complete), and pure existence and consciousness (*sat-chit-ānanda*)."<sup>13</sup>

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12. Ibid, pp. 8-9.

13. Ibid, p. 11.

Thus Vedānta recognises the functions and limitation of language and words, and as the mind and intellect cannot perform their function of describing the world of experience without the help of words and language, it maintains that the highest reality transcends words and language which seek to describe it. Brahman, therefore, is said to be that which is beyond description and characterisation. It is not accessible to the words, and the mind has to return back from it unsuccessfully without being able to grasp it. The highest of absolute being eludes description.

### 2.3 Religious language in Mādhyamikas

In Buddhism, the Mādhyamika is sceptical of all other philosophical systems. The Mādhyamika does not believe in reality. He denies that ultimate truth can be relative. It comes very close to the spirit of the Advaitins. Both the Mādhyamikas and Advaitins are in favour of some sort of Absolutism in Philosophy. Both the systems seem to agree on the ultimate truth, be it Śūnya or Brahman.

The doctrine of (Śūnyatā) 'emptiness' is the foundation of this philosophical system. Nāgārjuna, in his *Mādhyamika Śāstra*, examines a number of metaphysical and popular concepts such as 'time', 'space', 'movement', 'cause', 'agent' and 'occurrence' and shows that each one of them will lead to some kind of inconsistency or absurdity when it is held to be absolutely real like 'śūnyatā'.

Nāgārjuna explains his 'emptiness' doctrine as implying two levels of truth, the concealing (saṃvṛtisatya) or conventional and the ultimate (Paramārtha-Satya).<sup>14</sup> The conventional truth rests on untested postulates and presuppositions. An examination of these presuppositions through the very logical categories manifests their inherent inconsistencies. The ultimate truth cannot be grasped by language. But there is no other way by which

14. Nāgārjuna, M.K., Chapter 24, verse 8-10.

one can teach the ultimate truth. Therefore use of conventional language is made to expose the futility of language as an expression of ultimate truth. Thus one would be able to grasp the ultimate truth through the inexpressible. Moreover, Nāgārjuna says, when 'emptiness' is comprehended all views become comprehensible, but when 'emptiness' is not comprehended, all views become incompatible. This ultimate truth or 'tattava' cannot be comprehended and it cannot be described in language. Because the ultimate is inexpressible but can be presumably grasped by direct intuition. In fact, all phenomena are, according to the Mādhyamika, indeterminable and indefinable. It is asserted that this world of phenomena is neither real nor unreal, but logically indeterminable and unjustifiable. This indeterminacy of the phenomenal world is called, in the language of Nāgārjuna, the character of dependent origination of everything or the 'śūnyatā' or 'emptiness' or everything. Thus each phenomenon is logically indeterminable, it can neither be said to exist nor not to exist, nor both, nor either and hence it is inexpressible.<sup>15</sup>

Here I would like to remark upon the mathematical analogy of the concept of zero with Nāgārjuna's 'Śūnya'. Mathematically 'Śūnya' means zero or empty. The term 'Śūnya' is a mathematical concept invented by the Indian mathematician Bhāskaraṇḍhara slightly before the time of Nāgārjuna. The 'śūnya' or zero is a symbol which has no absolute value of its own but has a place value. To say that a concept is 'śūnya' means that is like the zero, because it has no absolute value of its own but has a value only with respect to a position in a system. Thus the mathematical concept of zero fits with Nāgārjuna's doctrine of 'śūnyatā' and ultimately it becomes inexpressible in the light of Mādhyamika and Vedānta.

There is a question why Buddha preferred to remain silent on certain metaphysical issues. The reason for the unwillingness

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Chapter 18, verse 8.

of Gautama Buddha to answer metaphysical questions is found in the inadequacies of language. Mahāyānists believe that some of his doctrines would not fit in with the language patterns. The Mahāyāna texts warn over and over again against the dangers that lurk in the use of words. "Neither words nor sentences can exactly express meaning. As words are only arbitrarily chosen to represent things, they are not the things themselves which in turn are manifestations of mind."<sup>16</sup> Thus silence is the best expression of reality. The doctrine of the void (*śūnya*) indicates the unreality or emptiness of the whole range of finite experience.

Some modern scholars have surmised that Buddha's approval of the ineffability doctrine can be inferred from his classification in the *Nikāya* of certain questions as 'thāpaniya' ('to be set aside' or 'not to be answered'). Sometimes these questions are called 'avyakta' questions, on which the Buddha refused to express an opinion.

Since the ultimate is ineffable, silence would be the best way to teach it. The 'tathata' is repeatedly described in the *Mahāyāna Sūtra* as 'anākāra'. "Without letters or words" i.e. ineffable. In the Mādhyamika School, the ineffability doctrine is expressed as follows. Nāgārjuna says (*Mādhyamika-Kārika*, 18, 9) that the characteristic of 'tatta' 'reality' is free from conceptual construction and non-diversified by discursive thought of language. Chandrakirti argues that 'nirvāna' or the ultimate is 'avacah', beyond speech and 'anākāra' beyond letters.<sup>17</sup>

In the Yogācāra School of Buddhism too, the ultimate reality is said to be ineffable because it is declared as completely devoid of the duality between the subject and the object. This duality belongs to the conventional level of reality. The ultimate reality thus cannot be taught or talked about.

In Buddhistic school of Philosophy, Nāgārjuna carried the

16. Organ Tony W., "The Silence of Buddha", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 4, 1954, p. 137.

17. *Mādhyamika-Kārika*, 18-9.

critical attitude of the Buddha to its logical extreme. Not only was the 'Perceiver' rejected but also the perceived object or the percept as well as perception itself. "Nāgārjuna used the early Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination and tried to show that in reality there is no logical justification for assuming the reality of anything at all. All our concepts whether of perception or of the perceptible, are empty 'Śūnya', in the sense that none of them claims absolute existence or independence."<sup>18</sup> Nāgārjuna, being quite consistent with his critical and dialectical method, did not elaborate upon the nature of the absolute reality. But he indicated that it lies beyond the reach of ordinary cognitive states and thoughts. The Buddhist idealists also try to say that reality is not grasped by our speech or expressed by our language. What is expressed in language is not real.

Nāgārjuna's intention in examining and denouncing one concept after another was to carry on a systematic criticism of human thought which would demonstrate the impossibility of metaphysical speculations. Language is alright for practical purposes, what is known as 'loka samvrti satya' but from the various metaphysical and speculative levels, it cannot do its normal function. Nāgārjuna, for example, goes on examining various metaphysical theories of causation one after the other and finds each one of them to be untenable.

The reality of Mādhyamikas is hidden by the conventional use of language. Language misleads us and creates a false picture in our minds. When ignorance vanishes along with its consequent misleading picture of the essence of things, one realises the 'tattva' which is nothing other than 'śūnyatā' or essencelessness. But in fact Nāgārjuna's point is that there is no metaphysical entity or reality hidden behind or above this world of ordinary discourse which is 'Śūnya' or 'Mihsavabhāva'.

Nāgārjuna did not say anything specific about the nature of the absolute. According to Asaṅgh and Vasubandhu, it is

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<sup>18</sup>. Nāgārjuna, M.H. verse 9, Chapter 18.



'consciousness only'. In Dīnāga's system the absolute reality is taken by the unique particulars (Svalakṣaṇa). Each barest particular can be interpreted either as an internal consciousness-moment or an external moment.

Each particular is an absolute. It is self-sustained and self-destructive, being unique to each moment. This has been called the Buddhist doctrine of 'universal flux', Stcherbatsky has called it the theory 'instantaneous being'.<sup>19</sup> Dharmakīrti notes the following criteria for each particular—(a) it is productive of effects or it can function (arthakriyā-samartha); (b) it is unique or dissimilar; (c) it lies beyond the 'meaning' of words; (d) it cannot be grasped by our verbalised cognition.<sup>20</sup>

"Reality i.e. the particular, is inexpressible in language, our speech reveals the world of universals, the world of constructions. These two worlds, the world of particulars and the world of universals, are, according to Dīnāga, completely separated. Thus the original Buddhist position that ultimate reality cannot be revealed by language is maintained."<sup>21</sup>

If reality is incommunicable and can only be perceived, our speech or words can never reveal or refer to 'reality'. Dīnāga thinks that words or names cannot directly express the particular datum. In order to refer to a unique particular, one has to use a word or a name and to use a word or a name one has to use a concept as the ground for its application which is according to Dīnāga, a conceptual construction. The only way a name can identify or refer to a particular is through negation.

The 'denotation theory' states that a word denotes i.e. expresses an individual thing. But here a particular difficulty will arise when we consider a general term like 'cow'. Dīnāga argues that a class name like 'cow' cannot denote or express individual cows or cow—particularly because it seems impossible for a single name 'cow' to express innumerable particular or individual cows:

19. Stcherbatsky, T., *Buddhist Logic*, 1, p. 79.

20. Dharmakīrti (P.V.) 11 Verses 1-3.

21. Matilal, B.K., *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

Diñnāga calls this the problem of innumerableness (*ānantya*) and notes it as a fault of the denotation theory.<sup>22</sup>

Our learning of a name as expressing something and our use of that name or word to express something must in some sense agree with each other. If the word 'X' is learned as expressing Y, then X should be used to express Y and Y only. As Uddyotakāra has put it, "if the word's relation to its meaning is not learned when we are learning that word, one cannot understand the meaning from the utterance of that word."<sup>23</sup>

If 'cow' is thought to be learned as expressing a cow particular, it should be used to express the same particular all the time because otherwise we will commit the fallacy of 'deviation'. In other words, the situation will be like this: We learn the word X to express Z and not Y. Thus, Diñnāga contends that we should rather conclude that 'cow' expresses or means the class concept, the cow universal and not the cow particular.

It is further argued that 'cow' cannot help us to identify the individual through any specific characters. A particular cow always has other specifications viz., it must have a particular colour, a definite size, and so on. The word 'cow' cannot tell us anything about these specifications. Hence it is not proper to regard 'cow' as expressing the cow particular.<sup>24</sup>

The question arises, how does a word serve the purpose of referring to a particular? In the context of perception, the question may be raised as in what way does a construction refer to a datum. Diñnāga answers that it is through 'negation' or elimination.

Each name as Diñnāga understands it, dichotomizes the universe into two e.g. those to which it can and those to which it cannot be applied. The function is to exclude the object from the class of those objects to which it cannot be applied. The bare particulars are unique instants and always in a flux, and thus

22. Ibid, p. 42.

23. Uddyotakāra, *Nyāyavarttika*, Eds., Dvivedin and Dravida, p. 230.

24. Matilal, B.K., *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

are beyond the reach of language.

There are some of the dominant trends in Western scientific thought and in the philosophy of language which are so closely akin to Mahāyāna Buddhism. First of all, there is relatively in its most general sense the thesis of relativism, which holds that the recognition that there is no universal truth which can be stated in any meaningful proposition. Everything which is so is so for a particular observer or a relation to a particular situation. It is obviously impossible to speak simultaneously from or for all possible points of view. There is thus no way of making any valid proposition about reality, being or the nature of all things. This is the general consensus of modern analytical philosophy, logical positivism, scientific empiricism or whatever it may be called. So far it goes this is also "the Mahāyānist's doctrine of 'śūnyatā' or voidness which is not as some have believed, the assertion that the universe does not really exist, but that all propositions or concepts of the universe are void and invalid."<sup>25</sup>

But unlike, say, logical positivism, the Mahāyāna does not rest its inquiry here and busy itself with logical trivia. It goes on to concern itself with the knowledge of the universal of reality, which is not verbal. 'Śūnyatā' has as it were a positive aspect which is experienceable but unmentionable.

Part of the discipline of Buddhism is therefore the cultivation of intellectual science for certain periods of time. This is to be aware of whatever happens to be, without thinking about it, without forming words and symbols in the mind. The world is there to seem is its fundamental state of 'tatrata' for which English has only the awkward of 'Thusness' or suchness. But it represents what Korzybski called the 'unspeakable', that is the non-verbal level of reality.

Thus in the Mādhyamika system a proposition has nothing to do with truth or falsity, therefore the question of assertion does not arise. In the Advaita Vedānta system, a proposition contains an element of truth but it cannot be asserted. Both

25. Suzuki, D.T., *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 15.

Philosophy. Bhāskarāchārya, one of the greatest mathematicians of India stated in his book, *Bijaganita* "Zero multiplied by any number is zero. Zero divided by any number is zero. But any number divided by zero is termed Khahāra, (Infinity). If any number or infinite added to or taken away from this Khahāra, it remains unaltered. It is like the infinite Brahman without a second, which remains unaltered both by creation and absorption. Bhāskarāchārya has explained the mathematical idea of Advaita. He states that any number divided by zero is called Khahāra, a value which neither increases by addition nor decreases in value by subtraction. It has already been shown that infinity minus infinity continues to be infinity. It can also be shown that infinity + infinity or any finite quality is also infinity."<sup>8</sup> Anything which neither increases nor decreases, numerically, may be either 'Śūnya' or Nirgūṇa Brahman of Vedānta, which is ultimately inexpressible.

Here I like to add the conception of Śūnya Brahman of Lord Jagannath, of Puri. The most characteristic ideology behind the Lord Jagannath formulated by Panchasakhās, and Bhima Bhoi of Orissa, is the predominance of the concept of Śūnya. There can be no doubt that this fundamental concept of the Vajrāyana idea of the Void identifying it with the Vedāntic ideas of Nirgūṇa Brahman. Balarama Dāsh in the first chapter of his 'Sārasvata Gitā' declares that 'Śūnya' and 'Brahman' are identical ideas and in his 'Sidhanta Dambarū', he presents a "Bijamantra" which reads 'Om' solution to Śūnya Brahman in its 'nirgūṇa' or real form it is conceived as the prime-mover behind all such manifestation.<sup>9</sup> This Śūnya as a supreme being i.e. Lord Jagannath, becomes inexpressible which is called Avyakta Pūrusa Brahman, Nirākār Brahman and 'Anaskāra' Brahman (Purosattama Sanghita—Chapter I).<sup>10</sup>

8. Śankārāchārya, Sri, *Maya and Brahman*,—a mathematical interpretation p. 1-2.

9. Mishra, K.C., *The Cult of Jagannath*, p. 158.

10. Rathasarma, S., *Purosattama Yoga*, p. 6.

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One who realises the oneness of Brahman has to completely give up language. He has simply to stand and stare, mute and speechless (*Savkha avākka eva*). Thus Śaṅkara's logic leads him to the conclusion that language is incapable of representing the real, that the Brahman can be realised only in a state of pure speechless consciousness. All that we know about Brahman is that it is pure bliss (self complete), and pure existence and consciousness (*sat-chit-ānanda*)."<sup>13</sup>

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18. Nāgārjuna, M.H. verse 9, Chapter 18.

'consciousness only'. In Dīnnāga's system the absolute reality is taken by the unique particulars (Svalakṣaṇa). Each barest particular can be interpreted either as an internal consciousness-moment or an external moment.

Each particular is an absolute. It is self-sustained and self-destructive, being unique to each moment. This has been called the Buddhist doctrine of 'universal flux', Stcherbatsky has called it the theory 'instantaneous being'.<sup>19</sup> Dharmakīrti notes the following criteria for each particular—(a) it is productive of effects or it can function (arthakriyā-samartha); (b) it is unique or dissimilar; (c) it lies beyond the 'meaning' of words; (d) it cannot be grasped by our verbalised cognition.<sup>20</sup>

"Reality i.e. the particular, is inexpressible in language, our speech reveals the world of universals, the world of constructions. These two worlds, the world of particulars and the world of universals, are, according to Dīnnāga, completely separated. Thus the original Buddhist position that ultimate reality cannot be revealed by language is maintained."<sup>21</sup>

If reality is incommunicable and can only be perceived, our speech or words can never reveal or refer to 'reality'. Dīnnāga thinks that words or names cannot directly express the particular datum. In order to refer to a unique particular, one has to use a word or a name and to use a word or a name one has to use a concept as the ground for its application which is according to Dīnnāga, a conceptual construction. The only way a name can identify or refer to a particular is through negation.

The 'denotation theory' states that a word denotes i.e. expresses an individual thing. But here a particular difficulty will arise when we consider a general term like 'cow'. Dīnnāga argues that a class name like 'cow' cannot denote or express individual cows or cow—particularly because it seems impossible for a single name 'cow' to express innumerable particular or individual cows:

19. Stcherbatsky, T., *Buddhist Logic*, 1, p. 79.

20. Dharmakīrti (P.V.) 11 Verses 1-3.

21. Matilal, B.K., *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

Diñnāga calls this the problem of innumerableness (*ānantya*) and notes it as a fault of the denotation theory.<sup>22</sup>

Our learning of a name as expressing something and our use of that name or word to express something must in some sense agree with each other. If the word 'X' is learned as expressing Y, then X should be used to express Y and Y only. As Uddyotakāra has put it, "if the word's relation to its meaning is not learned when we are learning that word, one cannot understand the meaning from the utterance of that word."<sup>23</sup>

If 'cow' is thought to be learned as expressing a cow particular, it should be used to express the same particular all the time because otherwise we will commit the fallacy of 'deviation'. In other words, the situation will be like this : We learn the word X to express Z and not Y. Thus, Diñnāga contends that we should rather conclude that 'cow' expresses or means the class concept, the cow universal and not the cow particular.

It is further argued that 'cow' cannot help us to identify the individual through any specific characters. A particular cow always has other specifications viz., it must have a particular colour, a definite size, and so on. The word 'cow' cannot tell us anything about these specifications. Hence it is not proper to regard 'cow' as expressing the cow particular.<sup>24</sup>

The question arises, how does a word serve the purpose of referring to a particular ? In the context of perception, the question may be raised as in what way does a construction refer to a datum. Diñnāga answers that it is through 'negation' or elimination.

Each name as Diñnāga understands it, dichotomizes the universe into two e.g. those to which it can and those to which it cannot be applied. The function is to exclude the object from the class of those objects to which it cannot be applied. The bare particulars are unique instants and always in a flux, and thus

22. Ibid, p. 42.

23. Uddyotakāra, *Nyāyavarttika*, Eds., Dvivedin and Dravida, p. 230.

24. Matilal, B.K., *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

are beyond the reach of language.

There are some of the dominant trends in Western scientific thought and in the philosophy of language which are so closely akin to Mahāyāna Buddhism. First of all, there is relatively in its most general sense the thesis of relativism, which holds that the recognition that there is no universal truth which can be stated in any meaningful proposition. Everything which is so is so for a particular observer or a relation to a particular situation. It is obviously impossible to speak simultaneously from or for all possible points of view. There is thus no way of making any valid proposition about reality, being or the nature of all things. This is the general consensus of modern analytical philosophy, logical positivism, scientific empiricism or whatever it may be called. So far it goes this is also "the Mahāyānist's doctrine of 'śūnyatā' or voidness which is not as some have believed, the assertion that the universe does not really exist, but that all propositions or concepts of the universe are void and invalid."<sup>25</sup>

But unlike, say, logical positivism, the Mahāyāna does not rest its inquiry here and busy itself with logical trivia. It goes on to concern itself with the knowledge of the universal of reality, which is not verbal. 'Śūnyatā' has as it were a positive aspect which is experienceable but unmentionable.

Part of the discipline of Buddhism is therefore the cultivation of intellectual science for certain periods of time. This is to be aware of whatever happens to be, without thinking about it, without forming words and symbols in the mind. The world is there to seem is its fundamental state of 'tatrata' for which English has only the awkward of 'Thusness' or suchness. But it represents what Korzybski called the 'unspeakable', that is the non-verbal level of reality.

Thus in the Mādhyamika system a proposition has nothing to do with truth or falsity, therefore the question of assertion does not arise. In the Advaita Vedānta system, a proposition contains an element of truth but it cannot be asserted. Both

25. Suzuki, D.T., *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 15.

these schools call their respective positions that of inexpressibility. But for advaita, inexpressibility logically suggests the possibility of assertion of truth, for the Mādhyamika inexpressibility suggests that our propositions being defective should be rejected. For the former, negation is a way to arrive at affirmation, for the latter, negation is a means to reject what we would ordinarily like to affirm. However, the Nīrgūṇa Brahman of Śāṅkara and Nāgārjuna's 'śūnya' have much in common.

Wittgenstein tells us that "Philosophical problems have depth, that they are deep disquietudes their roots are as deep in as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language". I think that Mādhyamika would agree with the above statement and would also agree with Wittgenstein's characterization of 'Philosophy as a battle against the bewitchment of the intelligence by words.'<sup>26</sup>

## 2.4 Nyāya Vaiśeṣika system of religious language

There is a very well established philosophic tradition in India, which tries to maintain that reality lies beyond the reach of language. In other words, the real world is inexpressible in terms of concepts. There is also the opposite philosophic thesis which tries to show that reality is knowable and hence expressible in language. But here I am concerned with the former view as inexpressibility in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy.

"The author of Nyāyasūtra, Gotama, defined perception as a knowledge or cognitive state which is born out of sense-object contact and which is to be differentiated from verbalization or form which is intermixed with words."<sup>27</sup> In most cases, our cognitive state is associated with some word or name. This may lead to the natural assumption that there is no cognitive state without language.

"Perception is a kind of knowledge and is the attribute of the self. Ordinary perception presupposes the sense-organs, the

26. Wittgenstein, L., *Blue and Brown Books*, ed. Rush Rhees, p. 111.

27. Matilal, B.K., *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

objects, the 'mānas' and the self and their mutual contacts. The self comes into contact with the 'mānas', the 'mānas' with the sense-organs and the sense-organs with the objects. Hence sense-object contact necessarily presupposes the 'mānas'-sense contact and the self 'mānas' contact."<sup>28</sup> Thus when 'mānas' and self come together with sense-organs so naturally there is a state of confusion in us, and as a matter of fact we cannot adequately express our perception which is due to apprehension (upalabdhi) and consciousness (anubhava).

The Naiyāyika maintains two stages in perception. The first is called indeterminate or 'nirvikalpa' or non-qualificative perception and the second, determinate or 'savikalpa' or qualificative perception. Here I am only concerned with the indeterminate perception.

This indeterminate perception is devoid of names, class concepts etc. This perception is the immediate apprehension, the bareawareness at the same time non-judgemental and non-propositional. When we see a white moving object at a distance and when it comes near we see it is a white cow. The earlier stage is indeterminate and the later one determinate. The state of indeterminate perception is psychological.

Gaṅgesha Upādhyāya defines "indeterminate perception as the non-relational apprehension of an object devoid of all association of name, genus, differentia etc. This perception is 'mere acquaintance' which William James calls 'raw un verbalized experience' while determinate perception is relational apprehension."<sup>29</sup>

In the verbalized form of a cognitive state, this 'unqualified' qualifier is not explicitly expressed. An unqualified qualifier cannot be verbalized properly because no property appears as qualifying an 'unqualified' such an entity cannot be expressed by a word because our use of a word always necessitates some qualification or condition. But however it can be indirectly referred to.

28. Sharma, C.D., *A critical survey to Indian philosophy*, p. 193.

29. *Ibid*, p. 195.

This non-qualificative perception (*nirvikalpa*) is neither true nor false. According to Gaṅgeśa the non-qualificative cognition is beyond our assignment of any truth value. He says "a non-qualificative cognition does not involve any qualification or predication and hence can neither be true nor false."<sup>30</sup> Thus it is inexpressible.

The Navya-nyāya system seems to presuppose a class of 'simple' properties or primitives which are not further analyzable. It is difficult to construct a definition of the class of 'simple' or fundamental properties or 'primitives'. A 'simple' property is always real in the sense that it is either separately existent and over above the fact it has a real substratum or it merely has a real substratum which it is supposed to characterize. The implication is that in the second case the 'simple' property may not be existent independently of the substratum. A generic property like 'cowness' is a simple property in the first sense. The whole world is composed of these simple properties (atom) which cannot have any constituent properties.

How can the idea of the 'simple' be justified or proven or established? One answer is that only a 'simple' property or a 'simple' object can appear as such a cognitive state without needing a further qualifier to qualify it. Thus, a non-qualificative perception is the perception of the 'simple'.<sup>31</sup>

The momentary nature of sound or language and its artificial and conventional association with the facts of the world are theories held in the Nyāya-vaishēṣika, System of Philosophy. The sound as the basis of the phenomenal world is recognised in the Philosophy of grammar. In this system, the basic absolute sound is termed 'Sphota'. The eternal relation of sounds with the objects of the world are accepted in the Mīmāṃsā system. But it is too complex. Dinnāga says that all words (sounds), all names, all concepts are necessarily relative and unreal. So it is, beyond language and intellect.

30. Gaṅgeśa, Part I, p. 302.

31. Matilal, B.K., Op. cit., p. 87.



The Naiyāyika, like Advaita Vedānta and Mādhyamika, admits negation in a somewhat unique way. According to Kumārila negation is known either by perception or by inference. The same sense-organ which perceives any object, perceives its non-existence also and the same inference which infers the existence of any object infers its non-existence also. Thus according to the Naiyāyika, "though negation is a separate category, non-apprehension as a separate 'pramāṇa' is not required as its means. Kumārila maintains that non-existence or negation exists as a separate category and is different from bare existence. Negation is not mere nothing."<sup>32</sup> Thus "the pot does not exist on the ground" is interpreted as "the absence of pot characterizes the ground", where absence of pot is treated as referring to an objective characteristic of the ground. When we perceive the bare ground, we perceive neither the pot nor its non-existence. Hence the perception of the bare ground is different from the non-existence and the non-cognition of the pot.

Nyāya advocates atomism, spiritualism, theism, realism and pluralism. Naiyāyikas have given an elaborate account of God and also considered God's grace as essential for obtaining true knowledge of the realities which alone leads to liberation. Udayana's arguments for the existence of God have become classical for Indian theism. However, the Nyāya should reduce its so-called innumerable eternal souls to a single spiritual principle and then should reconcile the dualism of matter and spirit in God by making them His aspects. Unless this is done the contradiction in Nyāya would not be avoided. If it wants to be self-consistent the Nyāya has to give up its atomistic and spiritualistic pluralism and its external theism."<sup>33</sup> But this is not possible in Nyāya Vaiśeṣika School of Philosophy.

Over and above, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's substance, causality and Being cannot be defined. Substance cannot be defined as the support (āshraya) of Qualities. Causality cannot be defined as

32. Sharma, C.D., *Op.cit.*, p. 223-224.

33. *Ibid*, p. 208-209.

mere antecedence and being cannot be defined as that exists, for even non-being exists. Thus category of Nyāya Vaiśeṣika becomes indistinct and indefinite.

## 2.5 Syādvāda—X is inexpressible

Jaina philosophers who being throughgoing empiricists and realists, developed a philosophical methodology that was unique to Jainism. Syādvāda which is called Sapta-bhanji, the doctrine of seven-fold judgement, is the theory of relativity of knowledge. 'Syāt' is sometimes used to mean 'Perhaps' or 'may be'. Thus, 'syāt' means, in Jaina use, a conditional Yes. It amounts to a conditional or relative approval.

The Syādvāda is the use in seven different ways to judgements which affirm and negate severally and jointly without self-contradiction. . . Every proposition gives us only a perhaps, a may be or a Syād. We cannot affirm or deny anything absolutely of any object. There is nothing certain on account of the endless complexity of things. It emphasises the extremely complex nature of reality and its indefiniteness.<sup>34</sup>

When we say 'this table exists', we cannot mean that this table exists absolutely and unconditionally. Our knowledge of the table is necessarily relative. The table has got innumerable characteristics out of which we can know only some.<sup>35</sup>

In Syādvāda, we observe the seven relative judgements as follows : (1) Syādasti—Relatively, a thing is real ; (2) Syādasti—Relatively, a things is unreal; (3) Syādasti-Nāsti—Relatively, a things is both real and unreal; (4) Syādavaktavyam—Relatively, thing is indescribable; (5) Syādasti cha avaktvyam—Relatively, a thing is real and is indescribable; (6) Syannāsti cha avaktavyam—Relatively, a thing is unreal and indescribable; (7) Syādasti cha nāsticha avaktvyam—Relatively, a thing is real, unreal and indescribable.<sup>36</sup>

34. Radhakrishna, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 302.

35. Sharma, C.D., *Op.cit.*, p. 53.

36. *Ibid*, pp. 53-54.

Out of the seven above judgements, the first four are the basic and important. From a certain point of view, you (Mahāvira) accept, "It is", and from another point of view, you accept, "It is not". Similarly, both "it is" and "it is not", as well as "it is inexpressible." All these (four) are approved (by you) with reference to the doctrine of standpoint (naya) only, not absolutely.<sup>37</sup>

We can symbolize these four basic propositions as '+', '—', '±' and '0'. The fourth predication, 'it (X) is inexpressible', is actually interpreted as the joint (combined) and simultaneous application of both the positive and the negative. The Jainas have, in this way, three primary and non-compound predicates, positive, negative and the neutral (+, —, 0). It is obvious, however, that the fourth predicate here (the joint and simultaneous affirmation and denial, which is Vidyānanda's explanation of the term 'inexpressible') must be taken to be a unitary whole, a primary predicate.<sup>38</sup>

If we affirm or deny both existence and non-existence simultaneously to anything, if we assert or negate the two different aspects of being and non-being together, the thing baffles all description. It becomes indescribable i.e. either both real and unreal simultaneously or neither real nor unreal.

The Jainas, the Buddhists and the Vedāntins say that because the world is neither real nor unreal, it is indescribable. But there is a problem whether the indescribable world is contradictory or not? The Buddhists and Vedāntins have criticized Syādvāda as a self contradictory doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

The first two judgements of Syādvāda ('+') ('—') are not in any sense contradictories. The third to be sure, is the joint assertion of the first and the second (±). If the first (+) and the second (—) are not contradictories, then the third (±) will

37. Yogal Kishore Mukhtar, *Aptamimamsa* Verse 14.

38. Mohanty and Banerjee (ed.), *Self, Knowledge and Freedom, Sapta-bhanji* by B.K. Matilal, pp. 164-166.

39. Sharma, C.D., *Op. cit.*, pp. 54 and 58.

not be self-contradictory. The fourth (0) (Syādavaktavyam—X is inexpressible) is the result of the third ( $\pm$ ) judgement. The speaker here contradicted himself ( $\pm$ ) and said nothing which ultimately leads to 'inexpressible'. If third is not self-contradictory then why the fourth (0). Besides, for example, we can say of a man 'He is both over six feet tall and under six feet tall' which is correct due to certain disease etc. Mahāvira himself followed a similar line of explanation in order to elaborate upon the apparently contradictory assertions like 'the person is both eternal and non-eternal'. In this way, Jainas can somehow answer the charge of self-contradiction against the fourth (0) judgement. Moreover Buddhists and the Vedāntins also agree that the world is indescribable, which is self-contradictory, and this can be removed only by transcending the world.<sup>40</sup> Thus Jainas, however, might reply that the fourth judgement (0) 'the thing is, X, in a sense, inexpressible', is not intended to distinguish the thing from other thing, but to include it in everything else. Thus all the five (+ 0) six (— 0) and shven ( $\pm$  0) which are slightly different in order, become inexpressible.

Anekāntavāda has a great similarity to the views of some leading contemporary Western philosophers, who also seem to have been guided by the principle of relative Pluralism and empiricism in ascertaining the nature of reality as Jainas.

Bertrand Russell, for instance, while discussing the 'Nature of Matter' makes a short distinction between physical objects in their private spaces and those that are in public spaces. According to him, 'a circular coin, for example, though we should always judge it to be circular, will look oval unless we are straight in front of it . . . . In different peoples private spaces the same object seems to have different shapes.'<sup>41</sup>

So also when Wittgenstein suggested us to leave language as it is and not to mould it in our formal logical structures, he overstates the theory of relativity in the subjects, ethics, aesthetics

40. Mohanty and Chatterjee (ed.), *Op.cit.*, pp. 169-170.

41. Russell, B, *Problem of Philosophy*, p. 29.

and religion and pointed out the language goes on holiday.

Similarly the realistic relativistic theory of Prof. A.N Whitehead or the idealistic relativistic trend in the system of W. James and F.C.S. Schiller can further be mentioned in support of Jainas' Anekāntavāda and Syādvāda.

## RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

### 3.1 Mysticism—a scientific and psychological analysis

As in every new approach to scientific questions and analysis, the theory of mysticism in religion would be concerned with the choice of starting point and method. Mysticism plays a great role in the field of religious language. "Mysticism is, in essence, little more than a certain intensity and depth of feeling in regard to what is believed about the universe."<sup>1</sup> Mysticism is not mystery. It is not imagination or symbol or allegory. It is direct and immediate comprehension of God, communion with God and union with God. "The term 'mysticism' is practically identical with 'religion' differing if at all only in its intensity."<sup>2</sup>

According to the *Maṇḍukya Upaniṣad* the "Unitary Consciousness is beyond all expression". To Plotinus "the vision baffles telling". Eckhart says that "the Prophets walking in the light . . . were moved to . . . thinking to teach us to know and where-

1. Russell, B., *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 10

2. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp. 11-29,

upon they would fall dumb, becoming tongue tied. R. M. Bucke says that his experience was impossible to describe." Tennyson says that "his was utterly beyond words." J.A. Symonds states that "he was not able to describe his experience to himself and that he could not find words to render it intelligible." Arthur Koestler says of his experience that 'it was meaningful though not in verbal terms.' Probably hundreds of similar statements could be collected from all over the world.

The ineffability of mystical experience is a doctrine which seems to be unanimously accepted by most modern mystics. William James (1962) in his important study of religion and mysticism noted four distinctive marks of any mystical experience, the first and the most important of which was ineffability. D.T. Suzuki mentioned some common characters of 'Satori' in Zen Buddhism, such as "Irrationality, inexplicability and incommunicability." By these expressions perhaps, he wanted to carry the same sense as ineffability. W.T. Stace (1967) is one of the few modern philosophers who have tried to give a philosophic justification of mysticism and who have examined its alleged ineffability.<sup>3</sup>

Stace begins his analysis of the ineffability problem as follows: "One of the best known facts about mystics is that they feel that language is inadequate, or even wholly useless, as a means of communicating their experiences or their insights to others. They say that what they experience is unutterable or ineffable. They use language but then declare that the words they have used do not say what they want to say, and all words as such are inherently incapable of doing so."<sup>4</sup>

When William James called mysticism 'ineffable' he clearly meant the first kind of ineffability. For he described mystical experience as more like "states of feeling"<sup>5</sup> i.e. emotive states—comparable to love or lover's state of mind. He argues, "One

3. Stace, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 225.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

5. William James, *The varieties of Religious Experiences*, p. 293.

must have been in love oneself to understand a lover's state of mind." This is what Stace has described as "The Emotion Theory". It is according to Stace, one of the possible explanations of the alleged ineffability of the mystical experience. But Stace has found this theory to be inadequate. Stace has argued that mystical experience is more like perception than emotion. He has considered that the Emotion Theory is wrong because it over-emphasized the role of emotion in the mystical consciousness and paid no attention to its other aspects.

A modern analyst, Arthur Deikman, has tried to present a psychological explanation of ineffability with his concept of deautomatization. He proposes the three types of mystical experience, all of which are claimed to be 'indescribable.'

The first type of mystical experience is based on primitive and infantile memories and related to fantasies of a preverbal or non-verbal sensory experience. This type of experience is usually explained by psychoanalysts as the "Oceanic feeling". It is like the memory of the undifferentiated infantile ego state. Such a feeling is a regression to a preverbal stage of experience and would be claimed to be ineffable.

The second type of mystical experience is claimed to be ineffable because it is 'too complex' or too out of the ordinary way to be verbalized. A typical example would be the drug-induced mystical state. Hence the acquired language skill of the subject may for the time being be inadequate.

The third type is called by Deikman as the 'trained transcended' mystical experience. Here the experience is claimed to be not blank or empty but intense. It is the experience which the mystics claim to be the ultimate goal of mystic path, which is inexpressible or incommunicable.

### 3.2 Mystical aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy

Wittgenstein's famous concept of 'das Mystische' appears in proposition 6.522, 6.44 and 6.45 of the *Tractatus*. "There is indeed the inexpressible." This shows itself, it is the Mystical (T 6.521).



Not how the world is the mystical, but that it is (T 6.44). One can very well learn mystical aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy in the *Tractatus*, by observing the following propositions

- (1) That the mystical is that there is a world (and not how it is).
- (2) That this 'fact' i. e. that there is, is not itself in the world ; and
- (3) That the fact cannot be pictured by facts, but it cannot be shown by them.<sup>6</sup>

There is considerable co-incidence between the presuppositions and results of the *Tractatus* and those of Russell's essay *Mysticism and Logic*. Russell describes metaphysics as an attempt to conceive the world as a whole by means of thought; in this, metaphysics unites two tendencies in man's mind, the mystical and the scientific. The mystical tendency manifests itself in certain moods and feelings, in which one has a sense of certainty and revelation. This certainty does not easily lend itself to expression in words unless it be by way of paradox, but four things chiefly characterize such beliefs. First, there is a belief in an insight into reality, an insight which is superior to and quite different from sense and reason. Second, the mystic believes that reality is one, containing no opposition or division. Third, he holds or feels that time is unreal, and fourth, he thinks that evil is mere appearance and perhaps that good and evil are both illusory (in any case his ethics involves an acceptance of the world). As regards all four of these beliefs, Russell maintains that mysticism is mistaken but that there is some value in the feeling of the mystic which may inspire not only the artist but even the scientist.

The relation of Russell's essay in *Mysticism and Logic* with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* will be clear in the following discussion. Wittgenstein too holds that there is no such thing as metaphysical doctrine, there is a feeling which may be called 'das Mystische', an inexpressible feeling. Those who have had it feel that they know something, but cannot put into words (*Tractatus* 6.522).

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6. Copi, I.M., *Essay on Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 361.

This felt 'insight' was the first mark of Russell's mystic. The second was the mystic's conviction of the unity and indivisibility of reality, which is surely parallel with Wittgenstein's description of mysticism as 'viewing or feeling' (T 6.45). The third mark was timeless, as a parallel for which in the *Tractatus* we have both the views of the world sub-species (Russell too quotes Spinoza in this connection) and the eternal life which according to Wittgenstein, belongs to the man who lives in the present (T 6.45, 64311). Finally, as parallel to the fourth mark, we have Wittgenstein's account that of good and evil in which he denies that they are in the world, rather they attach to the subject, they consist in an attitude of will towards the world-acceptance in the case of the happy man, for whom the world is harmonious while the unhappy man finds the world inharmonious. He has a bad conscience and is therefore in disagreement with the world (T 6.04). Thus all the four marks of Russell's mystic are in the *Tractatus* at least implicitly and there is the same evaluation of metaphysics.

Important though it is to notice these parallels between the *Tractatus* and Russell's work, there is one big difference between the two, a difference affecting precisely this question of mysticism. Russell took it for granted that Philosophy itself was not inexpressible in the way that mysticism was. We can see Wittgenstein's reaction to this in a letter written from Prison Camp to Russell. Russell had described the theory of types as a theory of correct symbolism. 'A symbol must have the same structure as its meaning' "that is exactly what one cannot say" replies Wittgenstein. You cannot prescribe to a symbol what it may be used to express.<sup>7</sup> In Wittgenstein's view, the logical properties of the world also were shown or manifested, they too could not be expressed. It was true that tautologies might be used to show equally well by all propositions, the chief difference was that a logical proposition had no other foundation than to make them manifest. Naturally, therefore, Wittgenstein says some things about logic which are very similar to what he says about ethics and

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7. Wittgenstein, L., *Note-book*, p. 129, par. 5.

the mystical. What is mystical is not how things are in the world, but that the world exists (T 6.44). Similarly, to understand logic, we need a certain 'experience' not of how the world is (not of how things stand in the world) but of the existence of something (T 5.552). Both ethics (T 6.421) and logic (T 6.13) are said to be transcendental or as he says in the *Notebook*, both of them are conditions of the world.<sup>8</sup>

By mysticism, Wittgenstein does not mean merely the attitude of mind in which a man asks these questions, but rather that attitude of mind in which he finds a certain answer to them. The mystic grasps the world as a whole and sees that or rather feels that, it is a system with a definite character.

Wittgenstein thought of his *Tractatus* as consisting of two parts. The first part is the published work, where this means what he had to say, and did say. The second and for him the important part is unpublished in the sense of the unsayable, something that is shown but not said. And this was at first treated by him, in the whole-sale manner of traditional mysticism. This is the sense that transcends the limits of language which are the limits of the world. But even in this early phase of his preoccupation with 'das mystische' he maintained that the unutterable is utterably contained in what has been uttered.<sup>9</sup> It is what is manifested by and in the utterance, without getting 'said' there. Here is a difference between traditional mysticism and Wittgenstein's position. The traditional account suggests an absolute somewhat that is eternally there for notice without benefit of any utterance, a somewhat that is obscured by utterance. But for Wittgenstein it is not that. The unutterable for him is made manifest in the utterance. Making logical room for the notion that what the utterance manifests or shows is part of what is uttered, though not said. This makes the notion of the ineffable not only more manageable, but even indispensable. One may utter but not say,

8. Wittgenstein, L., *Note-book*, p. 77, par. 7.7.

9. Butter, *Analytical Philosophy*, p. 83.

what is ineffable (shown) in the utterance. Or in short one may utter what, in the circumstances, cannot be said.

Religion, ethics, art are like metaphysics which are concerned with what cannot be said, that which transcends the world. The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen, in it no value exists. . . .For all that happens and is not the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within, the world...“It must lie outside the word (T 6.41). Propositions can express nothing of what is higher (T 6.42)”. Wittgenstein considered ethics and aesthetics are one and the same, they are both transcendental (T 6.421) and so is religion. How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself in the world (T 6.432). The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time. It is certainly not the solution of any problems of natural science (T 6.4312). Thus Wittgenstein states, ‘there are indeed, things inexpressible. They show themselves. They are, what is mystical (T 6.622)’.

For Wittgenstein, metaphysics, ethics religion and art all belong to the realm of the transcendental which cannot be said but shown. It would indeed be nonsense to contend as Stenius does, that what is inexpressible is just nonsense, and nothing else. The inexpressible (or the mystical) is every thing that is important in life. The whole point of the *Tractatus* is precisely to show the inexpressible by exhibiting clearly the expressible. This inexpressible is not nonsense, as Stenius stated.

### 3.3 Plato's and Tillich's metaphysical doctrine

Let me explain now, particularly, the inexpressibility of religious language according to some other Western philosophers.

Plato's theology is, of course, part of his general metaphysical doctrine. His life extended reaching the plane of wisdom and losing itself in the ineffable in transcendence. Plato's theory of Ideas which is his metaphysics, is the theory of objectivity of concepts.

That the concept is not merely an idea in the mind, but something which has a reality of its own, outside and independent of the mind. This is the essence of the philosophy of Plato.

Plato's ideas are the substance. They are absolute and ultimate reality. Their whole being is in themselves. They depend on nothing, but all things depend on them. They are the first principle of the universe.

Secondly ideas are universal. An idea is not any particular thing. The idea of the horse is not this or that horse. It is the general concept of all horses. It is the universal horse. For this reason ideas are universal.

Plato's ideas are immutable and imperishable. Ideas cannot change, they are eternal, unchangeable.

Like Wittgenstein's reality the ideas are outside space and time. They are not confined to any individuals and particular things. Ideas being universal they are outside time and space, because they are unchangeable and eternal.

By analysing the above characteristics of Plato's ideas we can assume that they are inexpressible by its nature. So also the theory of forms according to Plato,<sup>10</sup> are non-spatial, non-temporal and nonphysical and yet very real and hence indescribable.

Fundamentally, Plato's picture of the universe is the real, stable, permanent and eternal. The world perceived by our senses is not the true world, it is flux, appearance, illusion. The relation between the supersensible world of Ideas and the visible world of material things is explained in Plato's Dialogues : This supersensible world of Plato is something mystical and that cannot be expressed even.

Later Platonists have emphasised more and more the creative agency of the world of Forms. Here it changes from a static world of perfection into the source of all power and reality in the universe. In the process of the absorption of Platonic metaphysics into Christian theology, the ideal world was finally made into the Divine Creator not only of the temporary order

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10. Jones, W.T., *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 104.

in the universe, but of the physical universe itself as well. Thus it seems, there was a movement from Plotinus to the third century A.D. to transform the ideas in the active agencies, and finally into the Divine Power itself, which creates the physical world out of nothing and organises it according to the Divine Pattern of the forms.

Lastly, I can add the concept of philosophy, according to Plato, which is more or less similar to Wittgenstein. Plato had declared wonder or puzzle to be the origin or source of philosophy while Wittgenstein thought that philosophic reflection arose as a result of puzzling bewilderment produced by language. Both the views of wonder and the sense of puzzlement or bewilderment, as visualised by Plato and Wittgenstein respectively, are due to the very higher state of mind or idea.

Paul Tillich, his philosophical discourse, faces with the problem of religious language. He holds that theological doctrines 'symbolize' that about which nothing can be said literally except that it is metaphysically ultimate. One can say that Tillich has become a victim of language but not in the sense we all know so well and which is Wittgenstein's target in his famous remark—Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.<sup>11</sup> Tillich is a victim in the sense of not being able to make intelligible what he had in mind. The most elementary forms of it have found their way into daily speech. Repeatedly we say, or hear people saying things like "I do not know how to put it, as it were," 'you know what I mean' and so on. We all know regarding a particular thing, one has a something in mind, as we say, but one is unable to express it in a satisfactory way and occasionally one feels one cannot express it at all.

Tillich is insisting that we do not use human language literally or univocally, when we speak of the ultimate. Because our terms can only be derived from our own finite human experience, they cannot be adequate when applied to God. When used theologi-

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11. Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophy of Investigations*, 109.

cally, their meaning is always "neglected by that to which they point."<sup>12</sup>

However, where are the limits of Tillich's language and where are the limits of his world? Also, Wittgenstein's words that 'everything that can be said clearly' seems to imply the possibility of things that cannot be said. But does that mean that in those cases there are concepts for which there are no corresponding words: Or not even concepts and consequently no words, no linguistic forms? And what is the epistemological status of things that cannot be said? Can we do anything with such things?

Of course, having arrived at this point, one could say that Tillich's case is one of subjective, personal experience, perhaps not communicable at all, which ought to be the realm of psychology rather than the subject of Philosophy.

### 3.4 The analysis of God in religious language

Sometimes God is the central issue in the Philosophy of religious language. In Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Jainism we observe to certain extent the inexpressibility of God.

Here I shall first observe whether God is a proper name or not? But it is a controversial matter as some philosophers and theologians have considered God as a proper name. If we accept the view that God is a proper name then we have to specify what the bearer of the name is and this is impossible. Here one cannot speak of the reference of God, if one does not know what the bearer of proper name is and every genuine proper name must at some time have a bearer. If we do construe God as a proper name, then the proposition 'God exists', in the sense of 'exists' represented by 'Ex', is impossible, as the proposition 'Socrates exists' in this sense of 'exists' is impossible. To think that 'Socrates exists' is a possible proposition is to make the mistake of applying that which only applied to propositional functions to a value for an individual variable which occurs in a

12. Hick, John, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 83.

function.<sup>13</sup> As Russell says, "When you take any propositional function and assert of it that it is possible, that it is sometimes true, that gives you the fundamental meaning of 'existence' ". You may express it by saying that there is at least one value of X for which that propositional function is true. Take X is a man : there is at least one value of X for which this is true.<sup>14</sup>

God is a common name rather than a proper name. If we consider 'God' as proper name then one may put questions viz., when did God come into existence ? And how long has God been in existence now etc. ? But these are not applicable to him. In addition to that if God were a proper name then it could only occur in the subject place of a subject—predicate proposition and never by itself in the predicate place. A proper name may occur as part of a predicate but never as the whole predicate. When God cannot be a proper name then he cannot stand as a logical subject. What properly stands as the subject of the predication is the individual or a set of individuals, not in Frege's terms, a concept. The next question is whether 'God' can be used as descriptive predicable term. If we take 'God' as a descriptive predicate term like man, then it will be predicated of several individuals. But then it cannot have a plural form. Further 'God' is regarded as higher term (a formal concept in Wittgenstein sense) cannot be considered as a descriptive predicable in the sense of 'matter' or 'mass' of ordinary terms. In addition to that if we accept that 'God' is descriptive predicable then 'God' exists would be possible one, whereas on the contrary it is not logical to conclude that God exists is true, because God is eternal. Here the point of saying that 'God is eternal' is to draw our attention to the truth that God is not a spatio-temporal object. Whatever is God cannot be spoken of as coming into existence, going on existing, existing for a time and then ceasing to exist, occupying such and such a position in space and time etc. whereas whatever is a man or a flower (e.g.),

13. Durrant, Michael, *The logical status of God*, p. 17.

14. Russell, B., *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 232.



can be spoken of.

If "God" is a predicative expression, how can it significantly stand in the place of proper names like 'Socrates'. Thus we can come to the conclusion that either 'God' is not a proper name or a descriptive predicative term but an abstract term.

### 3.5 The existence of God

The subject of the existence of God, as a problem in Philosophy, has been a centre of debate since the time of Plato. Here I am not going to discuss this controversial issue in detail.

It is very difficult to define God. Because it is not a definite concept. The various ideas are included in the concept of God. However, the term 'God' is meaningful. Some logical positivists viz., A.J. Ayer, M. Schlick and Carnap etc. have formulated a criterion of meaningfulness. They say a statement is meaningful if and only if there are sense observations of a public kind that would be relevant to the truth or falsity of the statement.<sup>15</sup> But the verificationist view of meaning has been subjected to a great deal of criticism. According to Wittgenstein, the functions of language are many and various. The meaning of a term is known only by its use not by its verification. The meaning of a religious statement is seen in the use that is made of it, and we cannot determine in advance of a close scrutiny of its actual use, what it may mean. So, for example, 'God loves man' may be used in a relatively simple way or in a highly complicated manner. Differences in statement usage could involve differences in statement meanings. Thus Wittgenstein's view is that philosophers could take to religious language, allowing it to be explored in a more flexible and sympathetic manner.

In defining meaningfulness, the simplest view is in terms of capacity to be understood or in other words whether a statement or a concept is meaningful is to see whether people can understand it. When religious people, including theologians, speaking carefully and responsibly make statements containing the word

15. Ayer, A.J., *Language, Truth and Logic*, pp. 36-37.

'God' they do understand what they are saying. E.S. Mascall maintains that, as a fact of experience, theological statements are meaningful, in the context in which theological talk occurs.<sup>16</sup>

Believers not only believe that God exists, they also believe a number of things about him. It is not always clear how many of these things are explicitly or implicitly included in the definition which they assume of the word 'God'. In consequence, when they use 'God' they may not all be meaning precisely the same thing by it.

There can be no harm in adopting different definitions of 'God' in different arguments for God's existence, provided we are quite clear what we are doing and carefully check each against the others. Thus in one argument we might define God as a being having the attribute X and, having proved the existence of such a being, go on to argue that in addition it possessed the attributes Y and Z. In another argument we might define God as a being possessing the attributes X and Y and having proved the existence of such a being, go on to prove that it possessed in addition the attribute Z. We should then have two arguments proving the existence of a being possessing the attributes X, Y and Z.<sup>17</sup>

Let me examine some of the definitions of the term 'God'. St. Anselm's definition of God is 'something than which nothing greater can be conceived'. By 'greater' he does not mean practically larger, but superior or more perfect. J.N. Findlay defines the idea of God as the idea of the 'adequate object of religious attitudes'. F.C. Copleston said that God is a supreme personal being. Bertrand Russell also agreed to this view during their debate regarding the existence of God. Descartes has expressed in his *Third Meditation* that God is a supremely perfect being. From the point of view of metaphysics, God is the highest reality, the highest value and the highest end. By

16. Mascall, E.S., "Theology and Language", *The Openness of Being*, pp. 32-33.

17. Mascall, E.S., 'God and Logic', *The Openness of Being*, p. 36.

analysing the various definitions of God we can come to the conclusion that 'God' is a meaningful term and hence the religious language is significant discourse.

However, there are some criticisms regarding the meaningfulness of 'God' and of religious statements in general. A.J. Ayer said that God is the object of a purely mystical intuition and cannot therefore be defined in terms which are intelligible to reason. He also said that the nature of God is a mystery which transcends the human understanding. And what is unintelligible cannot significantly be described. Thus according to him the arguments for God can be neither meaningful nor verifiable.<sup>18</sup>

Antony Flew lays down a challenge to the religious believers. He said that any meaningful statement must be capable of being falsified. For the Theist, Flew suggests, no evidence could possibly count against God's existence. Therefore, 'God exists' is not a genuine assertion at all, since it cannot possibly be false but if it cannot be false, as per his condition, it is meaningless.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, John Hick, E.S. Mascal, Frederick Ferre, Dr. Raeburne S. Heinbeck, St. Anselm and F.C. Copelston etc. have given their views regarding the meaningfulness of religious language.

John Hick pointed out that the notion of verifying is itself by no means perfectly clear and fixed, and it may be that on some views of the nature of verification the existence of God is verifiable, whereas on other views it is not. The central core of the concept of verification is the removal of ignorance or uncertainty concerning the truth of some proposition. That P is verified means that something happens which makes it clear that P is true. A question is settled so that there is no longer room for rational doubt concerning it. He said verification is a logico-psychological rather than as a purely logical concept. It is to be construed as the verification of a prediction. In reply to

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18. Ayer, A. J., *Language, Truth and Logic*, pp. 119-120.

19. Weinberg, R. J., *Philosophy of religion*, P. 142.

Antony Flew he holds that verification and falsification are symmetrically related. They do not necessarily stand to one another as do the two sides of a coin, so that once the coin is spun it must fall on one side or the other.<sup>20</sup> Thus he accepts the verification principle in a modified form and tries to show that 'God exists' is a genuinely factual assertion.

In the introduction of John Hick's book, *The Existence of God* he writes that the mind is free to form concepts of various species of beings which do not exist, and it is impossible to tell from the inspection of a concept alone whether or not there is an extra-mental entity answering to it. Only experience can determine this.<sup>21</sup>

E.S. Mascall said that man makes use of language because he is an intelligent and social being. Much of the language which theology employs does not differ in any relevant respect from that of ordinary discourse and it raises no special problems. He said that meaningfulness means the capacity to be understood and the only way in which to discover whether a statement or a concept is meaningful is to see whether people can understand it. But for a linguistic empiricist to declare that he cannot give any intelligible meaning to the sentence 'God exists' may indicate nothing more than that he has never made a serious effort to enter into the linguistic community of those who affirm his existence.<sup>22</sup>

Frederick Ferre has mentioned in his book *Language, Logic and God* that theological discourse is characterized by responsive significance. Its words deal with symbols of great potency. Not the words or phases themselves but the content of words and phases of theological speech possesses the greatest power to affect the interpreter of this language.<sup>23</sup> The definition of 'God'

20. Hick, John (ed.) 'Religious statements as factually significant' *The Existence of God*, pp. 253-254.

21. Hick, J. (ed.), *The Existence of God*, 'Introduction', p. 3.

22. Mascall, E.S., *The openness of Being*, p. 32.

23. Ferre, F., *Language, Logic and God*, p. 221.

may well be held essentially to include reference to human experiences, but traditional theism will always insist on more than this in any complete definition.<sup>24</sup>

Heimbeck in his minutely detailed work *Theology and meaning: a critique of meta-theological scepticism* has argued for the meaningfulness of the language of classical theism and has shown the weakness of the verificationism of both A.G.N. Flew and R.B. Braithwaite. His conclusion is that having checking procedures (verification and falsification procedures) is a sufficient but not a necessary condition of cognitive significance, and that having semantic entailments and incompatibilities . . . is both a necessary and a sufficient criterion of cognitive significance.<sup>25</sup> He quotes Karl Popper, against Flew, that falsifiability is not a criterion of meaning, while disagreeing with Popper's view that falsifiability is the criterion for demarcating scientific theories from non-scientific.<sup>26</sup>

From the above discussion we may conclude that either 'God' is meaningful and that the language is adequate to define God. E.S. Mascal has said that no linguistic statement can do justice to the complexity of the situation to which it refers. This does not mean that all statements are equally and indifferently inadequate so that it does not really matter what we say about anything. They are indeed all inadequate but some are less inadequate than others. And their degree of inadequacy will at least partly depend on the degree to which those who utter them a genuine mental and linguistic community.<sup>27</sup> So whatever we may try to say in explication of the term 'God' something vital must in the nature of the case be left unexpressed.

*Empirical theism*—(God's existence is logically possible and in fact true)

The ontological argument attempts to prove the existence of

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24. Ibid, p. 149.

25. Heimbeck, R.S., *Theology and Meaning*, p. 37..

26. Ibid, p. 88.

27. Mascal, E.S., *Op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

God simply from the definition of the word God, or from the concept which that word connotes. The ontological argument is the only one that attempts to prove God's existence from pure reason alone. Not many philosophers or theologians believe that this proof is valid. But since it has occupied such an important place in the literature, our examination of arguments for God would be incomplete without a consideration of the ontological proof.

The argument proceeds as follows : God is a being than which no greater can be conceived. Now, we have the idea of such a thing. But existence is necessary to the concept of such a being, if he did not exist, he would not be as great as if he did exist and by definition he is the greatest being that can be conceived. Therefore such a being exists.<sup>28</sup>

The ontological argument was made famous by Descartes. Before it Plato discussed the problem in his dialogues, Aristotle provided the metaphysical concepts for the realist's treatment of it and suggested proofs of God's existence and St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas presented compact but forceful arguments for God's existence. St. Anselm's argument is named the ontological argument, where he endeavoured to show that by reflecting on the meaning of the word 'God' we can see that the statement 'God exists' is true in just this way. His argument can be stated in this manner. The word 'God' means 'the being than whom no greater can be conceived'. So 'God exists' is identical with "the being than whom no greater can be conceived exists". Now suppose someone denies that there is such a being. He will be maintaining that this statement is true : "The being than whom no greater can be conceived does not exist". But anyone who maintains that the being than whom no greater can be conceived does not exist cannot be right. For suppose that no such being exists. The man who denies that God exists understands what the phrase 'the being than whom no greater can be conceived' means, for he denies that there is any such being. Let us say

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28. Hospers, J., *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, p. 427.

then that when one understands what such a phrase as 'the being than whom no greater, etc.' means that being exists in his understanding.<sup>29</sup>

Norman Malcolm provides a sympathetic discussion of the ontological argument by a contemporary philosopher of the 'analytical' school. Anselm, in his ontological arguments, is saying two things in Chapter II and III of the *Proslogium*. He says that 'God is something greater than which cannot be conceived'. He holds that something is greater if it exists both in understanding and in reality, than if it exists merely in the understanding. An equivalent way of putting this interesting proposition, in a more current terminology is : something is greater if it is both conceived of and exists than if it is merely conceived of. In the next Chapter, Anselm says that "And it so truly exists that it cannot be conceived not to exist. For it is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist. Hence if that than which nothing greater can be conceived, can be conceived not to exist, it is not that than which nothing greater can be conceived. But this is a contradiction. So truly, therefore, is there something than which nothing greater can be conceived, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist. And this being thou art, O Lord, our God."<sup>30</sup>

Malcolm says that, here Anselm is saying two things. First that a being whose non-existence is logically impossible, is greater than a being whose non-existence is logically possible; second, that God is being than which a greater cannot be conceived.<sup>31</sup> The interpretation recently given it to by Charles Hartshorne and Norman Malcolm, according to whom what it really shows is that if God is possible he is also necessary, he cannot, so to speak, merely 'happen' to exist.

Verification analysis exhibits its narrowness when dealing

29. Weinberg, J.R., *Philosophy of Religion* pp. 4-5.

30. Anselm, *Proslogium*, 3, Deane pp. 8-9.

31. Malcolm, N., 'Anselm's ontological arguments' John Hick (ed.) *The existence of God*, p. 82.

with theological language. One may speak, without violating the ordinary uses of language, of mathematical facts of logic—even moral facts—as well as empirical facts. But verificationist analysis narrows the meaning of ‘facts’ and ‘factual’ to contexts relevant to our empirical vocabulary alone. When we speak of metaphysical facts, we need not suppose that they are independent of creative powers of intelligence. On the contrary, the facts of metaphysics are supremely dependent on the conceptual activity of mind. A metaphysical fact, therefore, is a concept which plays a key role within the system.

When Wisdom offers his famous parable of the two gardeners (made use of by Antony Flew, as we noticed earlier with the technique of verificationist analysis), there also all the facts and probable facts are available. If that parable is describing the accepted facts, Wisdom, then why not the religious language have factual context?

Positivist Philosophy is commonly held to be an enemy of religion. Modern-Positivistic Philosophy has been developed by men of scientific and not a religious turn of mind. Scientific observation statements are empirically verifiable, and whatever is not so verifiable—accordingly is ‘nonsense’. Theological statements are not verifiable by sense experience so they are nonsense. But Thomas McPherson in his article ‘Religion as the Inexpressible’ says that this opinion may be a mistaken one. Perhaps positivistic philosophy has done a service to religion. When positivists say that theological statements are ‘nonsensical’ here it means ‘not verifiable by sense-experience, but not literally in the sense of nonsense, which means absurd. The reason of this nonsense is that they are attempts to say the unsayable.’<sup>32</sup>

Rudolf Otto says, Christianity is a highly conceptualized religion. He seems to mean by this that Christianity is full of words, hymns, sermons, theological books, the Bible itself. The conceptualized part of religion—the part that is put into words—is

32. McPherson T., *Religion as the inexpressible*, A.G.N. Flew (ed.) *New Essay in Philosophical Theology*, pp. 40-41.



very important. But we, with our highly conceptualized religion must not forget that there is something else which cannot be put into words. He says, 'All language, in so far as it consists of words, purports to convey ideas or concepts—that is what language means—and the more clearly and unequivocally it does so, the better the language. And hence expositions of religious truth in language inevitably tend to stress the rational attributes of God.'<sup>33</sup>

Thus one can say that God's existence is logically possible and in fact is actual.

*Neo-classical Theism*—(God's existence is logically necessary)

The definition of God from which Anselm begins is that of something than which nothing greater can be thought; that from which Descartes begins is that of a supremely perfect being. These definitions are not identical, though it might not be difficult to argue that they are equivalent, that is to say anything which corresponded to the one also corresponded to the other. There are two statements of the argument in the '*Proslogian*' or as some recent writers would insist, statements of two similar but importantly different arguments, in Chapter II and III of that work respectively. The difference between the two chapters is that the former claims to prove simply that God exists whereas the latter claims to prove that he exists necessarily. To put the contrast in negative terms, the former claims to prove that God's non-existence is false, the latter that it is impossible. Both claim to prove that God exists. Then Anselm goes on to point out that unlike other existents, he exists necessarily. Malcolm's and Hartshorne's views are that whether or not 'exists' is a predicate and ascribes an attribute to God, 'necessarily exists' certainly is and does. Saying that God exists may not say what kind of being he is, but saying that he necessarily exists certainly does. Hartshorne's basic conviction is that to deny the existence of a being that has been proved to have necessary existence as an

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33. McPherson, T., 'Religion as the Inexpressible', A.G.N. Flew (ed.), *New Essays in Philosophical theology*, p. 136.

attribute is to utter a self-contradictory statement. But E.S. Mascall could not see, however, that it makes any difference whether the attribute in question is existence or necessary existence. In either case the most that can be validly argued is that if God exists he exists necessarily, but it does not follow that he exists. Hartshorne may be quite correct in arguing that necessary existence is included in God's essence, but the existence by which an existing being exists in reality is not an essence or constituent or aspect of an essence : it is an act.<sup>34</sup>

Hartshorne and J.N. Findlay are agreed that God's existence must be either necessary or impossible ; it cannot be a merely contingent matter whether there is or is not a God. Thus while God's existence is necessary, his actuality (by which Hartshorne means the character of his existence at any moment) is contingent. His actuality is thus concrete but his existence (that which is common to all the instantiations) is abstract. And while the existence of any particular universe is contingent, the existence of some universe, or other appears to be necessary.

Thus it seems that when God's existence is logically possible, then it becomes a necessary being, but when his non-existence is logically possible then it becomes a contingent being. Anselm, F.C. Copelston, N. Malcolm have agreed that God's existence is logically necessary.

Now let me examine the interpretation of Malcolm on the following points :

1. There is at least a use of the word 'God', in which it means 'a being than which a greater cannot be conceived'. Anselm has thus proposed a definition for the word 'God', and as such 'God' is a being than which a greater cannot be conceived' is a logically necessary truth.
2. Anselm is claiming that a being whose non-existence is logically impossible (a necessary being) is greater than one whose non-existence is logically possible (a contingent being). This is not to suggest that existence is a perfection.

<sup>34</sup> Mascall, E.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

3. God's existence is either logically necessary or logically impossible. For when dealing with the existence of any being, there are three alternatives—
  - (a) that its existence is impossible ;
  - (b) that its existence is contingent ;
  - (c) that its existence is necessary.

The net effect of the above considerations has been that there is no possibility that God is a contingent being. If he were, or even could be such, he would not be the being than which none greater could be thought. Consequently, his existence is, either logically impossible or logically necessary. If he exists, he exists necessarily and cannot exist, and if he does not exist, it is impossible for him to exist.

4. But the only way to show that God's existence is logically impossible is to show that the concept of God as the most perfect being conceivable is either self-contradictory or absurd. However, Malcolm holds that neither of these is the case.
5. Consequently, God exists and exists necessarily.<sup>35</sup>

Malcolm attributes to God not only necessary existence, but necessary omnipotence and necessary omniscience as well.

Descartes is construing existence as a perfection, and since the idea of God is that of being possessing all perfection, it is impossible for him to be conceived as not existing. The religious person must have a God whose existence is inescapable for both—reality and thought. For Aquinas God is not only a necessary being, but is the necessary being par excellence. Since having of (himself his) own necessary, and not receiving it from another, he is the cause of the necessary of all others necessary beings.<sup>36</sup>

Now let me summarise the neo-classical theism with the argument that an object is contingent if that object exists, but is such that it is possible for it not to exist. We shall count as

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35. Malcolm, N., 'Anselm's ontological Argument', *The Philosophical Review*, LXIX (1960), pp. 141.

36. Campbell, J.I., *The Language of Religion*, p. 139.

necessary any object that exists but which is such that it is not possible for it not to exist. Now assume that for any contingent object there is a time when it does not exist. It does not follow from this assumption alone that if there exists no necessary being there is a time when nothing exists. Though no (single) contingent object exists at all times, it could be that for each time some contingent object or other exists.

Assume that for any contingent object, there is a time when it does not exist. St. Thomas seems clearly to be supposing as well as that for any contingent object, at least one of the times when it does not exist is prior to a time when it does exist. It follows that every contingent object begins to exist, and that every object that begins to exist is brought in to existence by something else. That is to say that every contingent object has a cause.

An ontological argument may be looked upon as an argument for the conclusion that a certain concept is such that necessarily, something falls under it. But since it is not altogether clear what concepts are, let us replace talk of concepts with talks of sets of properties. Is there any set of properties such that necessarily, there exists atleast one object that has every member of that set? Or as we shall say is there any set of properties that is necessarily instantiated? Consider the following conditions on a set of properties:

(a) It contains N (necessary existence).

(b) It is possible that there be something has all its P (properties).

∴ Something has N and P essentially is true at W (world).

(E) Something has N and P.

Hence there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in understanding and in reality.<sup>37</sup> Moreover many eminently rational people believe (including scientists) that God exists and this fact tends to support the conclusion that it is not irrational to believe

37. St. Anselm, *Proslogium* (Fr. Sidney N.D.,) p. 8.

that God exists necessarily.

*Empirical Atheism*—(God's existence is logically possible and in fact false)

In the empirical atheism, Hartshorne pointed out that God's existence is logically possible, but in fact false. A state of affairs is said to be logically possible whenever the proposition that this state of affairs exists is not self-contradictory, and logically impossible when the proposition is self-contradictory. The existence of God is not a self-contradictory proposition. It is logically impossible for there to be a square circle but not a non-existent God. Secondly, when the term 'God' is meaningful and the existence of God is conceivable then it is logically possible that God exists. Thirdly when a state of affairs is really logically impossible, it is not imaginable by anybody, no one can imagine a tower that is both 100 and 150 feet high, or a circle that is square. If someone says he can form the image of a square circle, he is probably forming the image of a square, then of a circle, in rapid succession. But he can hardly imagine a figure that is both circular and not circular. Here the existence of God is imaginable by almost all human beings except the agnostic. Thus God's existence is logically possible. Lastly what is logically impossible could not be the case in any universe, what is only empirically impossible might be the case in some universe.<sup>38</sup> Thus the existence of God is the case in this universe so it is logically possible, but may not be possible empirically. When we speak of the rationality of religious belief we may have in mind one or other (or both) of two alleged characteristics of religious belief, its internal logical coherence and its correspondence with or its grasp of independent reality.<sup>39</sup>

Prof. R.B. Braithwaite has discussed the meaning of the statement 'God exists' in his Eddington Memorial Lecture, *An Empiricist's view of the Nature of Religious Belief* and pointed

38. Hospers, J., *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, pp. 70, 71, 72.

39. Robinson, N.G.H., 'The Logic of religious Language', *Talk of God*, p. 8.

out that religious language is ethically but not factually significant. He says there are three classes of statements whose method of truth value testing is in general clear: statements about particular matters of empirical fact, scientific hypotheses and other general empirical statements, and the logically necessary statements of logic and mathematics.<sup>40</sup> He says that religious statements, as they are normally used, have no place in this trichotomy. Statements about particular empirical facts are testable by direct observation. The only facts that can be directly known by observation are that things observed have certain observable properties or stand in certain observable relation to one another. 'God' is not an observable entity and so cannot be known by direct observation.<sup>41</sup> Thus according to Braithwaite the existence of God is not a fact.

Antony Flew, R.M. Hane and B. Mitchell, all of them agreed in their discussion *Theology and Falsification* that religious language is factually meaningless. Their arguments are that religious language is unintelligible or meaningless, in the way that two explorers came upon clearing in the jungle, considering that he is an invisible gardner and secondly the concept of 'blicks' and 'dous' and finally the parable of 'stranger'. The factual vacuity which verificational analysis discovers to be intrinsic to theological discourse. God's necessary existence is logically incompatible. Therefore, Findlay confidently concludes, such a 'necessary being' does not exist. Thus theological discourse has utterly failed, according to verificational analysis. Wittgenstein says in his *Tractatus* that propositions can express nothing of what is higher (T6.42). God is said to be higher and never reveals himself in the world (T 6.432). A.J. Ayer states that "the nature of God is mystery which transcends the human understanding is to say that it is unintelligible. And what is unintelligible cannot significantly be described. Again we are

40. Braithwaite, R.B., 'An Empiricist's view of the Nature of Religious Belief', Hick, J. ed., *The Existence of God*, p. 231.

41. Ibid, p. 231.

told that God is not an object of reason but an object of faith."<sup>42</sup> Ayer says that metaphysics is meaningless and has no sense. In that case the term 'God' is a metaphysical term, and it cannot be even probable that God exists.

Verificational analysis has yet more startling techniques for exhibiting the logically necessary falsity of theological discourse. The logical techniques of this form of analysis no longer leave room for attitude of (tentative surmise and doubts), according to J.N. Findlay. Not only can verificational analysis show that the language of theism must fail when it sets out to prove the existence of God, but turning the tables, it can be used to prove conclusively that the existence of such a being is logically impossible.<sup>43</sup>

The existence of God, John Wisdom maintains, is not an experimental issue, in the way it once was. Theists still pray and believe that their prayers make a certain result. But that is not a factual one. He finds 'metaphysical difficulty and scientific difficulty' in believing the existence of God. According to Wisdom questions like 'Does God exist', 'Do dogs think', 'Do animals feel', 'Do flowers feel'? are partly metaphysical puzzles and partly scientific questions. He says 'the existence of a God is not one to future happenings then it is not experimental and therefore not as to the facts.'<sup>44</sup>

Thus Wisdom's arguments for characterising the religious propositions and particularly the existence of God are non-sensical and without facts.

Does the problem of evil prove that God does not exist? J.L. Mackie in his article 'Evil and Omnipotence' admits that evil exists in the world where there is no rational proof of God's existence is possible. Why is evil permitted by God, granting that God does exist? Mackie states that the existence of God

42. Ayer, A.J., *Op. cit.*, p.118.

43. Ferre, F., *Op.cit.* p. 53.

44. Wisdom, John, 'God' in J. Antony Flew (ed. *Essay on Logic and Language*, pp. 204.

and there is evil both are logically incompatible. So the existence of God is false. But here I am not concerned with the problem of evil.

It should be clear that we can never use language literally when referring to God. All our words literally refer to some aspect of experience, relating to it other aspects. Our words are finite vehicles used by finite men to speak of some finite aspect of experience. All our words apply only to finite experience and hence not to God. From this premise the conclusion is drawn that the only way to speak is systematically to deny various predicates as applicable to him. Thus God is infinite, incomparable, immortal, inconceivable, absolute etc. This kind of negative language is found in the Bible.

People sometimes say that certain Christian beliefs are non-sensical. How, for example, can God be one person yet three persons? Or three persons in one person? God is 'wholly other', yet God is in us? Christ dies, yet lives. Are all these above sentences absurd or non-sensical? If they are not then why not? If they are, then how exactly is it that they are absurd or non-sensical? But do they then have some 'deeper meaning' which is not their literal meaning, do they make sense on a different 'level' from that of literal meaning? And if so, what is this level and how is it different from the level of literal meaning?<sup>45</sup>

All these questions indicate a worry. There is a certain way out of this worry. It is this: There are some things that just cannot be said. As long as no one tries to say them, there is no trouble. But if anyone does try to say there is trouble. We ought not try to express the inexpressible. The things that theologians try to say belong to the class of thing that just cannot be said.<sup>46</sup>

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45. McPherson, T., *Religion as Inexpressible*, AGN Flew ed., Op. cit., p. 132-133.

46. *Ibid*, p. 133.



Rudolf Otto in his book *The Idea of the Holy* pointed out that what is most distinctive in religion cannot be put into words! This is the 'non-rational' part of religion, 'non-rational' he equates with 'not capable of being conceptualized is the numinous' experience or creative feeling and it is equal to Wittgenstein's (the mystical or the mystical feeling) of religion.<sup>47</sup>

Our minds cannot understand God, nor is its concepts which can reach him. No concepts could apprehend God. He is in His very nature, unconceptualizable. To say that God is inexpressible or ineffable is to say that He is without qualities . . . . And this implies that any statement of the form 'God is X' is false. Thus to the intellect He is blank, void, nothing. You cannot attach any predicate to him, because every predicate stands for a concept, so that to affirm a predicate of Him is to pretend that He is apprehensible by the conceptual intellect. When we say God is inexpressible, here the term 'inexpressible' is not used grammatically as a predicate. This shows that 'God is inexpressible', is not really of the logical form, 'God is X', although it looks as if it were. Similarly, saying 'King Arthur is fictitious' does not constitute attaching a predicate to King Arthur, although it looks as if it did. Hence in saying 'God is inexpressible', we are not required to do what we are declaring to be impossible. Inexpressibility is not a predicate in the strict sense of the term. For to predicate inexpressible of X is really to deny something of X. Hence God is inexpressible asserts that an essential condition of its meaningfulness does not hold. But to say that X is inexpressible is obviously not to say that we cannot say anything about X in the sense of Wittgenstein say something about the unutterable uttered.

The religious literature is full of sentences connoting predicates to God. So also there are many sentences which have a declarative grammatical form and contain 'God' as subject. But if we examine them they will all turn out to be

47. McPherson T., 'Religion as the Inexpressible', AGN Flew ed., Op. cit., P. 141.

either negative or metaphorical. None of them express conceptions of God. We can speak only of extrinsic features of God, not of His intrinsic nature (Essential and Internal properties of Wittgenstein).

### 3.6 Wittgenstein's conception of God

It seems clear that Wittgenstein did not exclude God and the religious order from his Philosophy. Although he himself says very little systematically about it in his *Note-book*, *Tractatus* and *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. But Prof. Eddy Zemach has written an essay on *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mystical* in which the major portion is devoted to the analysis of Wittgenstein's concept of God.

Zemach starts with a brief analysis of 'World', 'Facts' and 'Objects'. He identifies God with the world i.e. the totality of facts. According to Wittgenstein, 'The world is the totality of facts' (1.1 *Tractatus*). There is nothing in the world according to Tractatarian Philosophy except facts. A fact is what is the case. It is so to speak 'objective'. It does not depend upon my will or wishes. Hence the world is independent of my will (6.373 *Tractatus*). There is no logical connection between my will and the world' (T 6.374). So also there is no such necessary connection between facts in the world. Facts are entirely independent of each other (T 12.1). The belief that inductive reasoning can establish a necessary connection is a superstition (T 6.3631-6.37, 5.1361). The facts of the world cannot obey my will. In the *Note-book* Wittgenstein says, 'The world is given me i.e. my will enters into the world completely from outside as into something, that is already there' (N 8.7.16). My will penetrates the world (N 11.6.16).

The world is a formal property of facts and not a fact itself. Language can describe only facts or possible facts, and not formal features of facts. Since the form of all facts i.e. factuality, is not a fact, it is not in the world. Therefore, according to.

Zemach, God is transcendental and not identical with the world but with 'The meaning of the world', which in its turn is equated with the 'formal features' of the facts (N 11, 6.16). To formal features of facts Wittgenstein calls 'formal' or 'internal' properties of facts (T 4.1211, 4.122, 4.124). The factual character of the world is a formal property of the world, which can be called as formal facts. The formal facts cannot be expressed in language. Facts can only say facts. A formal fact e.g. the subject-predicate structure of 'F X' is shown by the picture 'F X' as its form (T 4.1211, 4.124, 4.1274). 'What cannot be shown cannot be said' (T 4.1212).

The factuality of facts is not something stated, but rather something that is shown. A fact cannot express its factuality, only exhibit it. Thus the factuality of the Universe is not effable or expressible, though it is exhibited by the facts. Hence God, the inexpressible, is a formal fact.

Finally Prof. Zemach observed that the sense of the world is not contained in the world. It is so to speak higher (T 6.432). 'Proposition can express nothing of what is higher, (T 6.42). For that reason God is said to be 'higher', and to never reveal himself in the world (T 6.432). The world is, according to Wittgenstein the totality of facts. Facts are both said and shown. But facts are not the end of matter. There is the realm of the higher sense. Higher sense has nothing to do with facts, either natural or supernatural. Our language can only convey a certain literal sense. But the higher sense is inexpressible both literally and logically. God is, for Wittgenstein, an axiological concept, which can in no way be expressed by the language.

For Wittgenstein, perhaps, to see that in religion we are asking questions that cannot be answered is, in a way, to see the pointlessness to religion. Wittgenstein spoke of religious language in terms of his game theory. But he sensed the problematic and difficult character of religious statements. Religious controversies he judged 'look quite different from any normal controversies, (including scientific one) and reasons cited in favour of one side

or another 'look entirely different from normal reasons.'<sup>48</sup>

The primary job of the theologian is not to philosophise about his language but to use it. And as R.M. Hare puts it, '... many of the logical problems raised are not such as can be dealt with by logical amateurs. For this reason some who know very well how to use religious language have not been able to give a very convincing account of its use, just as some gardeners can grow very good vegetables without being able to tell us clearly or even correctly how they do it.'<sup>49</sup>

Antony Flew stated that 'some theological utterances seem to and are intended to provide explanations or express assertions. Now an assertion, to be an assertion at all, must claim that things stand thus and thus, and not otherwise. Similarly an explanation to be an explanation at all, must explain why this particular thing occurs and not something else.... But in so far as they do this their supposed explanations are actually bogus and their seeming assertions are really vacuous.'<sup>50</sup>

Prof. Wisdom observed that the existence of God in the religious language is not an experimental or experiential issue. Thus the religions are difficult to describe.

Besides Wittgenstein, R.M. Hare, Antony Flew, John Wisdom, A.J. Ayer has vehemently criticized the religious language stating that it is nonsensical and unintelligible which cannot be described.

### 3.7 God : Concluding remarks

In the above discussion of empirical theism, empirical atheism and neo-classical theism, I am not considering any one either to be correct or incorrect. Because, I think God is 'timeless' and 'spaceless', like Anselm, Schleier Macher, Nelson Pike and Wittgenstein. Thus it is not the task of the philosopher to

48. Wittgenstein. L., *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, p. 26.

49. Hare, R.M., *Language of Morals*, p. 179.

50. Flew, A. *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, p. 106.

decide whether God exists or not, but to ask what it means to affirm or deny the existence of God. I do agree with D.Z. Philips that philosophers, who talk of proving or disproving the existence of God, must not forget that words like 'existence', 'love' and 'will' are not used in the same way of God as they are of human beings or objects. Similarly, the meaning of terms like 'real', 'unreal' and 'rationality' differ from context to context. Knowing God is not like knowing a person or a thing of the external world.

Secondly, conceptions of God have been many and varied. There is a difference between God and the idea of God. The idea of God stated either positively or negatively is confusing to human beings. No person's view of God is either final or adequate, our knowledge is growing and incomplete. How can we speak of God using terms derived from our spatio-temporal world? Does God, being subject to time and space, seem non-eternal and impermanent?

Thirdly, questions of proof or verification are posterior to that of understanding, because we can judge whether something is true or not only after we have understood it. Of course, much of religion is very difficult and complicated to understand, and this is the consideration which attracts people to the view that religion has its own special kind of truth, rationality etc. Flew perhaps accepts Popper's claim that a statement may be scientifically acceptable even though it is not conclusively verifiable. In some cases the questions may not be applicable or sensible as Wittgenstein showed that there is no point in asking 'what proof or evidence I have that I am in pain'. Thus Wittgenstein's philosophy shows up misguided demand for proof or verification and so, applied to religious contexts. In the other words, according to Wittgenstein what cannot be answered that cannot be questioned even.

Lastly, although religious language is meaningful, it is not fact stating and therefore the question of truth and falsity regarding the existence of God does not arise. So we cannot come to.

the conclusion through arguments that either God exists or does not exist. Besides, the concept of God is more related to the way of life which is private and personal than the 'form of life' and as a matter of fact God being above the spatio-temporal concept becomes inexpressible. So also the time being indeterminable is inexpressible too.



## MORAL AND ETHICAL LANGUAGE

### 4.1 Concept of ethical language

There are a lot of problems in Ethics. Its scope is subject to differing interpretation and it is sometimes understood to include everything that has to do with value and evaluative experience, everything, in the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein, that gives meaning to life. Here I would like to deal with a specific problem of ethics e.g. the notion of inexpressible, which is not touched, so far by many philosophers. However, Wittgenstein has referred to it in his *Tractatus*. The problem of expression or communicability is an important issue not only for the subject of Ethics, but it covers the whole of Philosophy. Here I shall consider the subject matter of ethics from the standpoint of language. Modern ethics tries to analyse the place of values in a world of fact. Modern philosophers have come to realize that many theories in Ethics are not clearly expressed at all. The process of clarifying the meaning of questions and answers in ethics is called philosophical analysis. But I think that the linguistic problems of ethics are such as to remain unsolved because it is



subjective and intrinsic. And in the words of Wittgenstein (6.421 *Tractatus*), Ethics cannot be expressed in language, it is transcendental. But I think, only certain aspects of ethics become incommunicable or inexpressible.

Some positivistic philosophers stated that ethical statements are meaningless and nonsensical. But like other philosophers, I do not agree with it. Because positivists indiscriminately lumped ethical statements together with so many other kinds of statements that did not satisfy the canons of meaningfulness.

In recent times, controversy in ethical theory has centred upon one main question and two distinct gaps. The question is how moral language is connected to the language we employ to describe the world. And the gaps are those that first divide moral terms from straightforwardly descriptive terms and then divide moral propositions from the morally neutral propositions that are intended to describe the world.

To reach a more detailed understanding of ethics, we must pay attention to the ethical language and logical and psychological factors. According to R.M. Hare, ethics is the logical study of the language of morals. He says, "The language of morals is one sort of prescriptive language. And this is what makes ethics worth studying."<sup>1</sup>

## 4.2 The emotive theory

I shall particularly give emphasis to the Emotive Theory of language and also to some extent on the prescriptive language of ethics. Before we start to examine the details of the emotive theory, we must see its basic concept. The term 'emotive' is technical and indefinite which conveys the following informations.

attitudes and inciting action. C.D. Broad states that 'It may b in part of the expression of an emotion which the speaker is feeling. . . . Again a sentence may be used partly to evoke a certain kind of emotion in the hearer.'<sup>3</sup> A.J. Ayer pointed out that 'the function of the relevant ethical word is purely 'emotive'.' It is used to express feeling about certain object but not to make any assertion about them. It is worth mentioning that ethical terms do not serve only to express feelings, they are calculated also to arouse feeling, and so to stimulate action.<sup>4</sup>

"The emotive meaning of a word is a tendency of a word, arising through the history of its usage, to produce effective responses in people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word."<sup>5</sup> Stevenson says, 'emotive meaning is a meaning in which the response (from the hearer's point of view) or the stimulus (from the speaker's point of view) is a range of emotion.'<sup>6</sup>

Thus we are asked to believe that expressing emotion by means of a word with emotive meaning becomes a clear picture of this theory. Every emotive sentence puts some emotion into words. In this sense, the meaning of the sentence might be said to be emotional and the sentence to have emotionality; one of the problems in emotive sentences is to understand the nature of emotion. What is an emotion? Here I use the word 'emotion' very widely—to cover all our feelings. I will discuss this emotive meaning and emotion later on, but let me first consider the emotive theory of language.

The emotive theory of ethics is the view that the meaning of ethical sentences are primarily emotive. This need not imply

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3. Broad, C.D., *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* "Is Goodness the name of simple non-natural quality?", 1933, p. 34.

4. Ayer, A.J., *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 108.

5. Stevenson, 'The emotive meaning of ethical terms'. *Mind* 1937, p. 23.

that ethical sentences have no cognitive meaning at all, but such descriptive meaning must be secondary or only incidental. The truly important and illuminating feature in the interpretation of ethical language is its emotive meaning. Emotive meaning is that property of words or sentences by which they express or evoke feelings, emotions, desires or volitions. Expressing a feeling differs from describing a feeling in the way that 'saying 'ouch' differs from saying 'I am in pain'. Thus the significance of ethical sentences is to be understood in terms of their role in expressing the attitude of the speaker and evoking similar or contrasting emotions in the hearer.

This central thesis of the emotive theory is usually taken to imply several other propositions. First the distinctive feature of ethical sentences is their normativeness, certain sentences are classified as ethical precisely because they have a relevance for action which merely factual sentences lack. This relevance is normally interpreted casually: the practical nature of ethical sentences lies in the fact that they are verbal stimuli which cause us to respond by doing or refraining from doing something. The peculiarity of ethical language consists in its capacity to strengthen, weaken and direct our attitudes in such a way as to affect our practice.

Second, ethical sentences cannot be understood in terms of descriptive meaning. Some emotivists like A.J. Ayer, claim that genuinely ethical sentences have no descriptive meaning at all. Other emotivists, like Stevenson concede a certain descriptive meaning to ethical sentences. Moreover, if one wishes to understand the specifically ethical function of the sentences, he must examine its emotive rather than its descriptive meaning.

Third, ethical sentences possess no real objective validity. Since ethical sentences are not basically descriptive, they cannot be said to be either true or false. Thus with moral propositions questions of truth or falsity cannot begin to arise, and hence they cannot fit as conclusions in deductive arguments. Since there are no rational grounds to prefer one ethical sentence to

another, ethical sentences cannot claim any objective validity.

The distinctive features of ethical sentences are supposedly stated that ethical words cannot be defined in terms of natural characteristics. Actually the peculiarities of ethical language do not lie in the fact that it describes a realm beyond nature but in the fact that it does not describe at all. Once it is admitted that some languages are nondescriptive, it becomes possible to say that ethical language belongs to this nondescriptive part of language. In short, one cannot conclude that ethical sentences must be descriptive on the ground that all meaningful languages are descriptive. Of course there are many meaningful sentences which do not describe anything. Questions, imperatives and exclamations are obvious illustrations of this fact. Questions, imperatives and exclamations cannot be said to be either true or false.

Emotive meaning is that property of words or sentences by which they express or evoke feelings, emotions, desires or volitions. Expressing a feeling in the way that saying 'ouch' differs from saying 'I am in pain'. But both the expression and description did not communicate the actual event to the hearer. Similarly the words 'hurrah', 'alas' release the same emotions with equal directness. If emotive meaning is defined positively, as expressing emotions or issuing commands, for example, then it does not follow that ethical sentences have emotive meaning simply because they do not have descriptive meaning. It would follow, if we could assume that language performs just two functions, describing and emoting, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that language has great many distinct functions.

Thus the meaning of ethical sentences are primarily emotive rather than descriptive. For when two people dispute about some ethical statements they are disagreeing in attitude rather than belief. Ethical disagreement is disagreement in attitude.<sup>7</sup> Stevenson

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7. Wellman, Carl, *The Language of Ethics*, p. 100.

maintains rightly that there is a kind of disagreement which he calls disagreement in attitude as distinct from disagreement in belief. Factual disagreements, on the contrary, involve disagreement only in belief. Thus to ascribe to a person a certain attitude is to ascribe to him a certain pattern of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, emotions, words and deeds and the relative importance of the various elements in the pattern will vary according to the particular character of the attitude.

This sort of emotive meaning and attitude create a sense of inexpression about one's feeling. When A and B both may agree on the intrinsic value of X but A may not agree that X is a good on the whole, here A's agreement of X is due to his belief and disagreement as a whole is because of his attitude. Here the agreement and disagreement of A and B cannot be properly and adequately explained by them. Take another concrete example, i.e. my dislike of a certain painting. Here my disagreement is not a simple matter which can be described. I can, in fact, make many true descriptive judgements about that I see when I look at the painting. Yet these are all abstract and indeterminate in comparison to the rich concreteness of the visual presentation. I cannot catch its sensuous fulness and complex structure in words. Here again it is impossible for me to formulate in language the grounds of my attitude. Yet this does not prove that I have no grounds, that my judgements are beyond the reason. One may have reasons which he cannot give. Some reasoning starts with premises which escape formulation. Besides the question of agreement and disagreement in connection to belief and attitude, we can give some other examples regarding our unanalyzable feeling of taste. The taste of cold drink 'Limca' is so simple that it defies description, it is just this taste, and its flavour cannot be captured in words. It is the flavour

problem of communication. The person in that state of affairs trying to make up his mind whether to approve or disapprove of something. Here his attitude has a more conspicuous role in his problem than his thoughts or beliefs. So long as he is ethically undecided, his attitudes are in a psychological state of conflict: half of them approve of it and the other half disapprove of it.<sup>8</sup>

When a man has conflicting attitudes, he is virtually forced to think, to recall to mind whatever he knows about the alternatives before him and learn as much more about them as he can. Between his thought and his attitudes there is an intimate relationship. A change in his thoughts is likely to bring about a change in his attitudes and in particular, is likely to end or minimize his conflict by strengthening, or weakening one of the attitudes involved. Hence his problem of resolving his conflict will also be a problem of establishing cognitively the varied beliefs that may help to resolve it. Here the psychology is relevant to an ethical problem.<sup>9</sup>

We can also analyse the term 'good' in the emotive language. If one asks what such a word as 'good' means, it is manifestly implausible to answer that it stands for any fairly simple feature of things directly accessible to observation.

The term 'good' is indefinable. Then, if a definition is expected to preserve its customary meaning, it has no exact emotive equivalent. The term is indefinable for the same reasons that 'hurrah' is indefinable.<sup>10</sup> In fact 'good' had no precise sense, it was used vaguely. If someone would say 'this is good' and if we ask him why he says so, then he cannot give definite answer to it. Thus all normative, emotive, attributive and evaluative words like the term 'good' have the similar drawback to

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8. Stevenson, C.L., 'The emotive conception of ethics and its cognitive simplifications. *The Philosophical Review*, 1950, Vol. 58, p. 29.

9. Ibid, p. 294.

10. Stevenson, Op. cit., p. 82 and 86.

express their meaning.

A.J. Ayer says that the function of the relevant ethical word is purely 'emotive'. It is used to express feeling about certain object but not to make any assertion about them. It is worth mentioning that ethical terms do not serve only to express feeling, they are calculated also to arouse feeling and so to stimulate action.<sup>11</sup> But as ethics is 'purely emotive' so its feeling cannot be expressed in words. Regarding the concept of good, I have analysed it in the latter part of this chapter.

### 4.3 Emotive meaning

The emotive meaning of a word arising through the history of its usage, to produce (result from) affective responses in people. It is immediate aura of feeling, which hovers about a word.<sup>12</sup>

Stevenson has probably given us the most complete and penetrating analysis of the nature of emotive meaning. The emotive meaning of words can best be understood by comparing and contrasting it with the expressiveness of laughter, sighs, groans and all similar manifestations of emotions, whether by voice or gesture. But words which denote emotions are usually poor vehicles for giving them active expression.<sup>13</sup>

Emotive meaning is a meaning in which the response (from the hearer's point of view) or the stimulus (from the speaker's point of view) is a range of emotions. In the emotive meaning emotions fall within the broader range of psychological responses that were specified for meaning in general.

Emotive terms remain fully subject to the general forces of philological change. Slang words, a very typical manners, laughter and groans can be found in the customs of etiquette. The parallel is so close that one might almost call etiquette and conventions as a form of emotive sign language. These forms of

11. Ayer, Op. cit., p. 101.

12. Stevenson, Op. cit., *Mind*, 1937, p. 23.

13. Stevenson, Op. cit., p. 37, and 38.

language are private and subjective which are unintelligible to foreign eyes and words to foreign ears.

There are mainly three kinds of sentences which are stock examples of emotive meaning. The obvious type of emotive sentence is those in the exclamatory mood. To murmur 'alas' does not seem quite the same as describing one's feeling of despondency. 'Ouch' does not appear to have the same kind of meaning, as 'I am in pain'. Sentences such as 'damn you' have a function in our language quite different from descriptive sentences. Let us call the kind of meaning which such sentences have 'emotive meaning'. Exclamations also serve as a model of emotive meaning.

Imperatives are usually presented as a second illustration of emotive language. No doubt there are some imperatives which do function like exclamations. If I say 'go to hell' I am saying 'damn you' in other words certain imperatives, like 'drop dead' do seem to have emotive meaning. Normally imperatives are used to tell someone to do something rather than to express one's feeling towards him. 'Open the window' for example, instructs the person to whom it is addressed to do an action of the window opening kind.

There is a third example of emotive meaning which is containing emotionally changed language. Words such as 'maiden' 'garret' and 'home' seem richer in meaning than their descriptive equivalents such as 'young unmarried woman' 'attic' and 'house'. Part of this richness consists of connotations which are purely or primarily descriptive. It seems likely, however, that these words also have emotional connotations which add to their meaning. Moreover, the fact that we borrow some of them, particularly the four letter words, for frequent use in exclamatory sentences would suggest that their meaning might be partly emotive.

Emotion widely covers all our feeling and attitude. A feeling may be anything which we feel, any state of consciousness of which we are directly aware. The term 'feeling' is to be taken



as designating an affective state reveals its full nature to immediate introspection without use of induction. In this sense feelings include all of our sensations. A precise definition of 'attitude' is too difficult a matter to be attempted here; hence the term, central though it is to the present work, must for the most part be understood from its current usage, and from usage of many terms (desire, wish, disapproval etc.) which name specific attitudes.<sup>14</sup>

When emotions are conceived this widely they include all states of feeling, attitude, agitations, moods and desires. It is convenient to speak of emotive language as more or less strong. The strength or weakness of an emotive sentence is a function of the intensity of the emotion put into words. For example, 'hurrah' may express vigorous emotion in the football game but elsewhere it may be attended by only the faintest echo of emotion. However, we do not get the proper sense out of these emotive terms. In emotive language the meaning becomes complicated and sometimes it does not communicate any idea to the hearer. The so-called expression of emotive terms do not come under the semantic rules. Emotive meaning is subjective and it touches the feeling and attitude of the person. All these, feeling, attitude, desire, moods etc. are the private factor of the life. Thus in certain cases, the emotional expressions do not say something conceptually. Once again it is clear that the uttering of a certain word results from a certain emotion or feeling or attitude is not a question of meaning, but rather psychological or biographical. To say that an expression has emotive meaning if it expresses the speaker's emotion is very inadequate.

To express an emotion is not to describe it. The sentence 'I am annoyed' describes the annoyance of the speaker. It quasi-compares the speaker's state of mind with other psychological states and claims that it is correctly characterized as of the annoyance of the speaker. It does not classify the speaker's state of

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14. Stevenson, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

mind, nor does it claim to be a correct quasi-comparison. That expressing an emotion is not just another way of describing it can be seen from the fact that while it is quite easy for one person to describe the feeling of another, it is quite impossible for one person to express another's feelings. Clearly, to express an emotion is not to describe it or to communicate it. We say that an artist expressed his feeling on canvas or a poet expressed his ideas in his poem or that the bereaved widow showed expression to her sorrow. In such cases, to express seems to be to produce something or to do something which externalizes the inner feeling. But here is a question, whether the artist's arts, poet's poem and widow's tears have expressed in the same way as they have inside, their mind? Like word and deed are, sometimes, in conflict, which allow either word or deed or thought and feeling to be decisive. So also the external productions may sometimes do not tally with the internal feeling, due to certain cause. It is also very difficult to point out here the causal system in the factor of emotive language. It is crucial to grasp the implication of this causal theory here, although Stevenson wishes to explain all emotive meaning in causal terms.

Emotions are more shadowy and elusive, less sharply outlined than the conceptual structures of thought. Words tend to fit emotions rather poorly. The deeper our emotions are the more difficult they are to express. Tennyson spoke of thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears. Perhaps he meant feeling rather than thought in the narrow sense of conceptual ideas. And no doubt if they were too deep for tears they would be too deep for words. Of our surface feelings, we talk freely. But when the depth of human personality is stunned we fall silent. The emotion theory of mystical ineffability merely extends these psychological generalizations to cover the case of mystical consciousness. Ineffability, then becomes a matter of degree. The experience of falling in love at any rate for the first time may render the lover speechless. The mystic experience profound blessedness and joy, sometimes ecstasy and rapture. There may

also be feelings of awe and reverence for what is sacred and holy in his experience. The depth of his emotion accounts for his difficulties with words.<sup>15</sup> Various theories have been put forward to explain the expression of emotion, but there are serious difficulties with them.

#### 4.4 Concept of good

I want to analyse the concept of good from the standpoint of ethical language. According to ethical non-naturalism, some ethical terms are verbally indefinable. If you say that something has such and such consequences, you are making an empirical statement about it, but if you say that having such and such consequences is good, you are saying something quite different and not translatable into any empirical statements at all. To say that X has such and such characteristics, is to say one thing, but to say that X is good quite another. Words such as 'good', 'right', 'ought' are so fundamental in ethics that there are no other words by means of which to define them.

The term 'good' is indefinable. It has no exact emotive equivalent. The term is indefinable for the same reasons that 'hurrah' is indefinable. A definiendum and its definiens have the same meaning. A sign whose meaning is characterized and the characterizing sign do not have the same meaning. When sign Y characterizes the meaning of sign X, the meaning of X is the referent of Y, not the (psychological) meaning of Y. Thus the emotive meaning of 'good' is not defined when it is characterized.<sup>16</sup>

Let me now explain the concept of 'good', that how it becomes indefinable and inexpressible according to Plato, Kant, Hume, Moore and Wittgenstein.

#### Plato

Plato's theory of idea is his metaphysics. This idea is the

<sup>15</sup> Stace, W.T., *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 278.

<sup>16</sup> Stevenson, Op. cit., p. 82.

idea of the Good. The idea of the good is the highest idea. For every idea is perfection in its kind. All the ideas have perfection in common. And just as the one beauty is the idea which presides over all beautiful things, so the one perfection must be the supreme idea which presides over all the perfect ideas. The supreme idea, therefore, must be perfection itself, that is to say, the idea of the Good.

There must be one highest idea, which is supreme over all the others. This idea will be the one final and absolutely real being which is the ultimate ground of itself, of the other ideas, and of the entire universe. This idea is, Plato tells us, the idea of the good. This highest idea of the good is indefinable and inexpressible.

There is, however, one important defect in the dialectics of Plato. The supreme idea, he tells us, is the good. This being the ultimate reality, is the ground of all other ideas. Plato ought, therefore, to have derived all other ideas from it, but this he has not done. He merely asserts in a more or less dogmatic way, that the idea of the good is the highest, but does nothing to connect it with the other ideas. On the other hand it might, with equal force, be argued that since all the ideas are substances, therefore, the highest idea is the idea of substance. All that can be said is that Plato has left these matters in obscurity and has merely asserted that the highest idea is the good, which becomes indefinable and incommunicable.

Consideration of the idea of good leads us naturally to enquire how far Plato's system is teleological in character. A little consideration will show that it is out and out teleological. We can see this by studying the many lower ideas. Each idea is the perfection of its kind. And each idea is the ground of the existence of the individual objects which come under it. The teleology of Plato culminates in the idea of the good. That idea is the final explanation of all other ideas, and of the entire universe. And to place the final ground of all things in perfection itself means that the universe arises out of that perfect end

towards which all things move.

God is identical with the idea of the good. God is not a personal God at all, since the idea is not a person. The word 'God', if used in this way, is merely a figurative term for the idea<sup>17</sup> which becomes indefinable and inexpressible. The abstract language of mathematics and the technical prose of Philosophy, are inadequate for communication about the highest and most important forms about the meaning of life and its value for instance.<sup>18</sup>

Good, for Plato, means resemblance to the pure form, or universal model of goodness, which serves as the standard for all value judgements. Actions are right, laws are just and people are virtuous to the degree to which they conform to the ideal model. Plato's main goal in his ethical philosophy is to lead the way toward a vision of good. Plato was the fountainhead of the religious and idealistic ethics.<sup>19</sup>

### **Kant**

Kant himself regarded the highest good as extremely important in the articulation of the critical philosophy. He even regarded the formulation and pursuit of this ideal as the 'chief goal' of all philosophy and the concept of the highest good itself as representing the world morality.

Kant's concept of highest good is derived from further examination of features of objects or ends of pure practical reason.

"Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or even out of it, which can be called good, with qualification, except a good will".<sup>20</sup> The moral good for Kant is identified with virtue or qualities the inclination to well being. The moral good, the

unqualified good of virtue, cannot as we have seen be taken to be identical with 'the good for morality' that is, with the object of pure practical reason. Such an object must include not only this unqualified and unconditional good, but also the qualified and conditioned ends or object of the finite rational will.

The moral good cannot be a mere formal condition of ends, but must consist in an end whose promotion follows directly from the formal condition of all good ends. This end is virtue, man's moral strength of will, which consists in the perfection of the disposition to make only a sufficient motive of action. Each morally good act is good only if it does promote this end by exemplifying this striving in its formally legislative maxim.

If the moral good is the unqualified object beings as ends in themselves, it would seem evident that our duty to pursue this our own moral good but the moral good of all men. But Kant himself seems in one passage to suggest that it is a man's duty to further the moral perfection of others.

It seems altogether proper to regard the critical moral philosophy, along with Kant in his most profound moral convictions, as holding that the moral good of all finite rational beings is the unqualified and unconditioned end of the finite rational moral agent.

Throughout this discussion of Kant's conception of the highest good, considerable emphasis has been given to this conditional relation between the moral and natural goods, between the legislative form of a maxim and the natural ends which are directed to its material, between virtue as worthiness to be happy and human happiness.

The highest good, as such an unconditioned, is a systematic unity of ends, as the entire object of pure practical reason. But more importantly the idea of the highest good is an idea of an unconditioned, which alone makes possible the totality of conditions. Kant expresses this fact about the highest good by calling it a final end (Endzweck) that purpose which needs no

other as a condition of its possibility. The highest good is thus conceived of also as the first end, the original end determined by the moral law. The end from which all others are derived. The highest good then, is not a unity of ends in the sense of a mere aggregate, it exists as an idea prior rationally to every particular end. We adopt in obedience to the law and is thought of as the teleological condition for all object of pure practical reason.

The highest good of course is a philosophical conception and while it may play a role in ordinary rational morality. Kant does not intend to confuse the idea of an unconditioned end of morality with an ordinary 'duty' of virtue an end which is also a duty.

Categorical imperatives tell us what is good without qualification, the intrinsic or absolute or unconditioned good, the good in itself, of simply the good in the strict and proper sense of the term. It concerns not the matter of the action or its intended result, but its form and the principle of which it is itself a result; and what is essentially good in it consists in the mental disposition, let the consequence be what it may. This imperative may be called that of morality.<sup>21</sup>

It can be re-examined (in the Second Critique) the object of the moral will which is usually called 'the highest good' (*Summum bonum*). Kantian analysis reveals this to be a complex notion including within itself, the supreme good (*bonum superemum*) or virtue, and the worthiness to be happy, and 'the whole and perfect good' (*bonum consummatum*) or the precise proportionment of virtue and worthiness to be happy with actual happiness.<sup>22</sup> This, highest good or Kant's categorical imperative which he called 'morality' becomes inexpressible in language.

### **Hume**

Hume is an emotivist in moral philosophy; he makes his first

concern in *A Treatise of Human Nature* and *The Enquiries* that goodness and rightness of conduct could not be perceived or established by reason. In his ethical doctrines, Hume declared again and again that reason cannot be the absolute guide. He maintained that we are determined in our behaviour by our feelings. In Hume's own words "since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows that they cannot be derived from reason. . . . The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our action."<sup>23</sup>

Hume however does not intend to say that reason is of no importance in moral judgments. No doubt, moral judgments are based on sentiments, but reason has its place in making the judgment. Hume accepts the contribution of cognitive elements to moral judgments, but he ascribes the most important role, here, to sentiment and emotions. A moral theory is non-cognitivist, owing to its emphasis on non-cognitive elements. Because non-cognitivist need not totally eliminate cognitive elements. So Hume's position is that of a non-cognitivist.

Let us consider the question, what is good? Commonly it is maintained that there is something in a particular action or a thing by virtue of which it is considered to be good or right. Now the question is what is that something? According to Hume, there is nothing in a thing or an action by virtue of which it may be said to be good or right. There is a certain kind of emotion—the emotion of approval or disapproval and the goodness or rightness of an action consists in the feeling of approval or disapproval which it arouses.

Hume's moral predicates e.g. 'good', 'right', 'bad' etc. or moral judgments do not make any assertion about any matters of fact or relation of ideas. They only evoke emotion—the emotion of approval or disapproval. Hume means to say that no action can be virtuous or morally good unless the feeling is aroused or is in conformity with the emotion of approval. Thus

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23. Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 457.



good-ness is not an objective quality belonging to facts or actions, but it is produced or given to an object or action by our emotion of approval. Hume maintains the same view in regard to beauty.

Thus the chief characteristics of emotivism are present in Hume's moral philosophy. Here we get the sense of inexpressibility in Hume's concept of goodness and rightness.

### G.E. Moore

One of the most influential of contemporary ethical intuitionists, G.E. Moore maintains that all ethical propositions are based on the notion of 'Good'. The question how 'good' is to be defined, is the most fundamental in all Ethics.

What then is good? How is good to be defined? Now it may be thought that this is a verbal question. A definition does indeed often mean the expressing of one word's meaning in other words. But this is not the sort of definition I am asking for. Such a definition can never be of ultimate importance in any study except lexicography. If I am asked 'what is good?', my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked 'how is good to be defined?', my answer is that it cannot be defined and that is all I have to say about it.<sup>24</sup>

Moore begins by saying that 'good' has no definition because it is a simple notion and has no parts, just as 'yellow' is a simple notion, that just as you cannot, by any manner of means, explain it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is.<sup>25</sup>

When we say that the thing is good, it is incapable of any definition, in the most important sense of that word. The most important sense of 'definition' is that in which a definition states what are the parts which invariably compose a certain whole, and in this sense 'good' has no definition because it is simple and has no parts. Prof. Henry Sidgwick also stated that good is an 'unanalysable notion'.

24. G.E. Moore, *Principia of Ethics*, pp. 5-6.

25. *Ibid*, p. 9.

Thus 'good' is indefinable and unanalysable because it is simple and has no parts. Only a complex thing can be defined. The object of definition in Moore's analysis is not the word 'good' but the metalinguistic entity 'goodness'. So we can only understand him as saying that the word 'good' is indefinable.

Moore meant that it was a mistake to attempt to define 'good' in terms of anything else. He thought that most of the traditional ethics erred by explaining morality by means of something non-moral. Thus the utilitarians equated the good with the useful, the hedonists identified it with the pleasant, others explained it as God's will, and so on. Moore's contention is that all of these theories confuse 'ethical facts' with natural facts.

This is perhaps best understood in the context of logical positivism. 'Facts' for these thinkers have indicated were what can be verified empirically. But there is no way of verifying goodness in this way unless we reduce goodness to something else, utility for instance. Hence Moore claimed that ethical facts were simply a different kind of fact. Most of the analysts of this period agreed with Wittgenstein that there were no ethical facts. They agreed with Moore that to explain ethics in terms of natural facts would be to commit the "naturalistic fallacy" and they also held with Wittgenstein, that all meaningful statements must be factually verifiable. They concluded that there was no way of discussing ethics.<sup>26</sup>

Moore points out that the proposition that Good is not identical with any natural or metaphysical property. If it is analysable at all, it involves in its analysis some unanalysable notion which is not natural or metaphysical. That some unanalysable notion of this sort is involved in Ethics. It may be true that good is unanalysable and therefore cannot be expressed by other words which contain an analysis of it.

In conclusion we may raise a general question : how can any

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26. James, V., Mc Glynn, S.J. and Jules, *Modern Ethical Theories*, p. 81.

one possibly prove that 'good' is the name of simple indefinable quality? I think it will be agreed that a proposition will be considered as proved if we could provide the following premises:

1. If P then q (either not P or q)
2. P.

Thus 'good' is the name of a simple indefinable quality (P), can be logically established if we could find some data of P. Such that either not P or P. It seems to me that the required P will have to be the way or ways we use the word 'good' or proposition containing the word 'good'. If we could show that the way we use ethical words and proposition will not be possible unless we believe that there is a simple and unique quality, we would have succeeded in proving that we must accept that there is such an entity. This can be done only by a careful examination of the function of ethical words and ethical propositions.

### Wittgenstein

In his *Lecture on Ethics* Wittgenstein emphasizes the difference between absolute judgments of value and relative judgment of value. Words such as 'good', important, right have a relative and an absolute use. For example, if I say that this is a good chair, I may be referring to its adequacy in fulfilling certain purposes. But I can reverse my judgment as follows—this is not a good chair, since I no longer want to relax, but to work. Like this relative use of word 'good', Wittgenstein illustrates the difference where ought is concerned in the following example.

Suppose that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said, 'well, you play pretty badly' and suppose I answered, 'I know, I am playing badly but I do not want to play any better,' all the other men could say would be 'ah', then all right. But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said, 'you are behaving like a beast', and then I were to say, 'I know I behave badly, but then I do not want to behave any better'; could he then say 'ah', then that is

all right? Certainly not, he would say 'well you ought to want to behave better'. Here we have an absolute judgment of value, whereas the first instance was one of a relative judgment.<sup>27</sup>

In the *Lecture on Ethics* Wittgenstein says mainly three experiences have absolute value. First is what he calls his experience par-excellence in which he wonders at the existence of the world. Second is the experience of feeling absolutely safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens. Third is the experience of feeling guilty, about which he says very little. His first experience is called mystical which cannot be expressed.

Since goodness or badness cannot be qualities of the world, they must be qualities of the willing subject. According to Wittgenstein, what is good and evil is essentially the I, not the world (N 58.16). As the subject is not a part of the world, but a pre-supposition of its existence, so good and evil are predicates of the subject not properties in the world (N 28.16). "My will is good or evil" (N 11.6.16). But what do good and evil mean? Wittgenstein tells us in the *Note-book*: "Simply the happy life is good, the unhappy bad" (30.7.16) or I am either happy or unhappy, that is all. It can be said, good or evil do not exist (8.7.16). Thus there is only one categorical imperative 'like happy' (8.7.16, 29.7).

According to Wittgenstein, values are not facts. Facts may have value, but so it seems, value is what is other than fact. That a fact has value is not a formal 'fact' about this fact; if whatever is in the world is a fact, values cannot be in the world.

"The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world, everything is as it is and everything happens as it does happen, in it no value exists and if it did, it would have no value." (*Treatise* 6.41)

If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside

27. Phillips, D.Z., *The Philosophy of religion*, 'Religious belief and language games', p. 122.

the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. . . . It must lie outside the world.

If the world is to be conceived in this way, as a sign whose 'key of interpretation' is its value, i.e. its ethical attributes, it will have a sense independent of its form. The word representing duties, values, obligations, good are the subject of the ethical attributes. Obviously it is impossible to speak about values, since language is a set of pictures of facts, and the subject ethics is beyond facts.

In the proposition of 6.41, *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein says 'In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen, in it no value exists if it did, would have no value.'

If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case.<sup>28</sup>

Ethical propositions as usually understood, do not state facts, do not state what happens to be the case. On the contrary, they try to say that certain situations are good or bad, ought-not-to exist and so on, they pass judgment on what happens to be the case. Ethical propositions thus purport to say something 'higher' than ordinary descriptive propositions which merely state facts. But if the doctrines of the *Tractatus* are correct, such things cannot be said.<sup>29</sup>

Wittgenstein says in 6.42, of the *Tractatus* that 'it is clear that ethics cannot be expressed. Ethics are transcendental. He said in the proposition 6.52, we feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course, there are then no questions left and in itself is the answer.

Wittgenstein even said that the point of the *Tractatus* was ethical, and that the more important part of the book was the part that he did not write. He meant that, among the things that cannot be said, those which he did not even try to put into

28. Wittgenstein *Tractatus*, 6.41.

29. Pitcher, G., *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, p. 160.

words,—religion, morality and aesthetics—are more important than the one that he did try to put into words, philosophy.

Wittgenstein's positive attitude towards mystical is abundantly substantiated by recent publications of Wittgenstein, i.e. *Lecture on Ethics* and Waismann's (Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein). He is reported to have said in 1929 'Man has the urge to thrust against the limits of language. Think for instance about one's astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question and there is no answer to it. Anything we can say must, *a priori*, be only nonsense. Nevertheless we thrust against the limits of language . . . But the tendency, the thrust, point to something . . . I can only say I do not belittle this human tendency. I talk my hat off to it . . . For me the facts are unimportant. But what man means when he says that 'the world exists' lies close to my heart'.<sup>30</sup>

And he concluded his lecture on ethics with the following : 'My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men whoever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. Thus running against the walls of our cage is perfectly absolutely hopeless. Ethics, so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it.'<sup>31</sup>

Thus according to Wittgenstein ethics is transcendental and is without facts, so our ordinary language is not applicable to it. So he said whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. (*Tractatus*).

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30. Wittgenstein, under *winer kreis*, pp. 68-118

31. Fann, K.-T., *Wittgenstein's conception of Philosophy*, pp. 28, 29

## ANALYSIS OF AESTHETIC LANGUAGE

### 5.1 Art and feeling

The problems of aesthetics are usually complex and critical. Here I wish to deal with the controversial problem of aesthetic expression.

Probably no conviction is more deeply held in modern aesthetic theory than that works of art express what cannot be expressed in ordinary discourse.

John Dewey puts it in this way : If all meaning be adequately expressed by words, the art of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Langer has more recently put it in this way : "What does art seek to express ? Every work of art expresses, more or less purely, more or less subtly, not feelings and emotions which the artist has but feeling and emotions which the artist knows."

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1. Kennik, W.T., "Art and ineffable" *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1961, Vol. 58, p. 309,

Such knowledge is not expressible in ordinary discourse. The reason for this ineffability is not that the ideas to be expressed are too high, too spiritual or too anything else, but that the forms of feeling and the forms of discursive expression are logically incommensurate, so that any exact concepts of feeling—and emotion cannot be projected into the logical form of literal language. Verbal statement . . . is almost useless for conveying knowledge about the precise character of our affective life.”<sup>2</sup>

Dewey again says that we cannot with ordinary prose discourse, reproduce in words a single emotion or rather the suggestion here is that we could if only we had more than one lifetime in which to do it. Of course we have only one lifetime, so we cannot. But poets, novelists can. This is atleast part of the substance of Dewey’s complaint that all meanings cannot be adequately expressed in words.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Langer’s complaint is similar to Dewey’s. All works of art she says express ‘forms of feeling’ they give us, ‘insight into the nature of sentences’. And the trouble with ordinary discourse is that its forms are ‘logically incommensurate with the forms of feeling’. At least part of what this means is that ordinary language cannot convey to us ‘the precise character’ of feelings because crude designations like ‘joy’, ‘sorrow’, ‘fear’, tell us as little about vital experience as general words like ‘place’, ‘things’ etc. tell us about the world of our perception.<sup>4</sup>

In sum, Dewey says that language cannot reproduce the feelings that works of art express and evoke and Mrs. Langer says that language cannot give us insight into or knowledge of feelings whereas works of art can.

Dewey says that we cannot ‘reproduce in words’ the feelings that works of art give us. Experienced events and situations have unique and unduplicated qualities that ‘impregnate’ the emotions they evoke. The fear I experience in situation-1 is

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2. Ibid, p. 309.

3. Ibid, p. 310.

4. Ibid, p. 310.



not the same as situation-2 because situation-1 is not the same as situation-2, and the properties that serve to distinguish one situation from the other impregnate or qualify emotion in each case. So if I really wanted to reproduce in words the experience of fear in the two situations, I should have to add all of these qualifications which serve to distinguish the two situations and make them unique. And presumably so many qualifications would need to be added that it would take more than one lifetime to add them.<sup>5</sup>

But can art be superior to language in this respect? Language is also capable of evoking emotions, and why could not evoke the same emotions as works of art or any other, concrete situations. But every situation is unique. If this is the case, then it is quite clear that works of art cannot do what they are supposed to do, any more than language can. For suppose I experience fear in situation X. I cannot communicate or reproduce that feeling in language, at least not in ordinary or specific discourse, because I cannot bring in all of these qualifications that would be necessary to do so.

Suppose I write a poem or paint a picture. But the poem or picture cannot communicate, or cannot 'reproduce' my feelings either. To be sure, it does not attempt to describe situation X or the fear I felt in that situation. Instead it builds up a new concrete situation, which cannot evoke my fear. For my poem or picture is now an item in a new situation very unlike the situation X, in which there was no poem or picture. Besides the poem that I write has certain feelings and emotions, at a particular time. But afterwards I may not have that feeling or meaning. Thus it is not possible to communicate my actual feelings in that poem. Here we may say that the poem or piece of art is obscure and symbolic.

It is quite clear that no emotion can conceivably be communicated or 'reproduced' as Dewey wants it to be. For Dewey

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5. Ibid, p. 318.

is making a self-contradictory demand both on language and on art.

Let us analyse the specific complaints of Dewey and Mrs. Langer against the adequacy of language. These complaints are not aimed at inadequacies or defects of language for which there is thought to be any remedy, and it is a curious sort of deficiency or inadequacy for which there is in theory no remedy. Suppose a man complained that there must be something wrong with his protractor because with it he could not draw a square circle. This complaint is unreasonable at best and at worst no complaint at all. The complaints against language that we have been considering are, I think, of this order. They do not strike at remediable difficulties and hence they do not strike at inadequacies or defects of language at all. They do not point to something that language cannot do or that art can do better than language can. It is one thing to complain that one does not have the words, or the right words to express or to describe his feelings, it is quite another thing to complain that there can be no words to express or describe his feelings. Ordinarily we do not complain that language is inadequate to express or describe our feelings but that we are inadequate to express or describe them on particular occasions.

Take the complaint common to Dewey, Langer and also Prall that language cannot name certain feelings. On any ordinary interpretation of 'naming' this is manifestly not the case. What kind of naming is it then for which they think that language is inherently inadequate? This is not easy to decide. Presumably it is some sort of 'specific or exact' naming for the complaints about language's lack of specificity in its names for feelings and emotions.<sup>6</sup>

It is not to deny that works of art serve purposes which language, ordinary and technical, does not serve. Works of art do have 'values and meaning' not ordinarily found in common or scientific discourse. But it is to deny that there are meanings

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 318.

that cannot be said or communicated by means of language but can be said or communicated by works of art. Works of art may serve as vehicles of illumination and enlightenment, but they do not do so, by saying that unsayable, communicating the incommunicable. However, to deny that works of art are essentially or necessarily vehicles of communication of information is not thereby to make art a trivial concern.

Bergson draws the most radical contrast between art and language. For him, art functions more as a source of pure metaphysical insight and understanding than as a purposefully employed medium of human communication. "So art . . . has no other object than to burst aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities; in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself."<sup>7</sup> Bergson views art as portraying something essentially concrete, individual, non-conventional and thus uniquely real.

Prall's view shares much in common with this Bergsonian critique of language. Prall holds that there is a qualitative experiential content presented in experience from which language abstracts and generalizes for purely practical or theoretical reasons; where for Bergson language distorts through somehow reshaping that which is given, for Prall language is unfaithful to reality because it fails to adequately preserve or reproduce everything which is originally given, specially a certain 'feeling' which Prall claims is always found in the aesthetic surfaces of things directly experienced.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, though Bergson and Prall differ with respect to precisely how language distorts or alters experience, both agree that language does in fact fail to faithfully represent reality as it is. In each case, this is a deficiency from which art is supposed to be peculiarly free.

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7. Bergson, H., *Laughter from the collection comedy*, W. Sypher. (ed.), p. 162.

8. Ibid, p. 163.

This general proposition, however, that linguistic description must necessarily distort reality while artistic representation is somehow capable of things as they really are a part from symbolic convention, is open to familiar objection which Goodman purposes vigorously in both language or art and the way the world is, the difficulties lie just in assuming it makes any sense to begin with to talk about the world or our experience of it, independent of some conventionally devised scheme of symbolic description or representation. Goodman argues that there is no standard of finality to the world with respect to which different modes of description or representation may be compared simply because according to him the world is only as it may be appropriately described or represented in the first place.

Neither true description nor realistic representation capture the world in this non-conventional, non-interpretive sense just because there is nothing thus to capture.

In this context the claim that language distorts reality while art does not, or does so less seriously, appears unsupportable and hard to fathom.<sup>9</sup>

## 5.2 Art as a symbol

The work of art is a symbol of human feelings. Art in general is defined by Mrs. Langer as 'the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.'<sup>10</sup> Meaning is conveyed through symbols, such as language. In regard to language Mrs. Langer accepts, Wittgenstein's theory of the *Tractatus* according to which language pictures facts. A proposition is a picture of a structure — the structure of a state of affairs. The picture is essentially a symbol of what it represents.

It is a limitation of this theory of language that only those facts which can be pictured can be thought about or talked about. 'Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be said can be said clearly (T 4.11.6)

9. Goodman's, *Op. cit.*, p. 6-10.

10. Langer, S.K., *Feeling and Form*, p. 27.

Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent (T 7).<sup>11</sup> According to Mrs. Langer what is inexpressible in the discursive symbolism of language is 'subjective experience', emotion, feeling and wish from which only symptoms come to us in the form of metaphysical and artistic fancies.<sup>12</sup>

The two basic assumptions are that language is the only means of articulating thought and everything which is not speakable thought is feeling. They are linked together because all genuine thinking is symbolic and the limits of the expressive medium and therefore, really the limits of our conceptual powers. Furthermore, a symbol is used to particular ideas of something we wish to think about and until we have a fairly adequate symbolism we cannot think about it.

Let us analyse the non-discursive symbol of Mrs. Langer. The most familiar sort of non-discursive symbol, a picture like language, it is composed of elements that represent various respective constituents in the object, but these elements are not units with independent meanings. The areas of light and shade that constitute a portrait, photograph for instance, have no significance by themselves. The same is obviously true of painting, drawing etc.

Since we have words, there can be no dictionary of meanings for lines, shading of other elements of pictorial technique. A picture has to be schematized if it is to be capable of various meanings. Without the help of words this generalization if possible at all, is incommunicable.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the non-discursive symbol of art there is also a presentational symbol. Presentational symbols are symbols of feeling and works of art are symbols of this kind. Presentational symbols differ from discursive symbols in several important respects. Discursive symbols have a vocabulary which is the unit of meaning. These meanings are fixed and definable or

11. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (4.11 6817).

12. Langer, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

13. Langer, S., *Philosophy in a new key*, p. 76-78.

translatable. But here I am not concerned with this type of discursive symbol. Presentational symbols on the other hand have no vocabulary, they are untranslatable, and cannot directly convey generalities.

Let us suppose for a moment that there are presentational symbols. What reasons are there to believe that works of art are symbols of this kind? Are they indeed symbols of feeling? Mrs. Langer discusses this point at considerable length in the case of music. Music can be explained on the assumption that music is signal. If music has an emotional content, she says, it has in the sense as language has its conceptual content symbolically.

Mrs. Langer's position can be summed up in the following quotation from *Feeling and Form*—"What art expresses is not actual feeling, but ideas of feeling, as language does not express actual things and events but ideas of them." She also says "for purpose of logical analysis art is unsystematic. It involves a constant play of formulative, abstractive and projective acts based on a disconcerting variety of principles. The several kinds of abstraction allow many different logical projections to mingle in the making of one complex symbol, the created image and presents the artist's idea, the work of art which consequently is analysable in any single set of terms."<sup>14</sup>

According to W.M. Urban, language is not the only symbolic form. In art, religion and science itself, non-linguistic symbols are employed. In art the religion the symbols evoke and communicate meaning only inadequately expressible in words.<sup>15</sup>

Kant says, all intuitions which we supply to concept *a priori* ... are either schematic or symbols of which the former contain direct the latter indirect, presentations of the concept.<sup>16</sup> A symbol is thus opposed to the discursive but not to the

14. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, p. 284.

15. Langer, S.K., *The Journal of Aesthetics and art criticism*. 1962 Vol. 22, "Abstraction in Art", p. 380.

16. Urban, W.M., *Language and Reality*, p. 410.

intuitive. H. Flanders Dunbar classified symbols into three classes, viz., (1) extrinsic or arbitrary ; (2) intrinsic or descriptive; (3) insight symbol. Here we are mainly concerned with the intrinsic and insight symbol. The symbols of art and religion are chiefly of this type.

Insight symbols are always intrinsic. An example of insight symbol is that of lion as the symbol of courage and lamb as the symbol of meekness or patience. The peculiar character of such symbols lies in the fact that they do not point to, or lead to, but they lead into. They do not merely represent, through partial coincidence, characters and relations, they are or at least are supposed to be a vehicle or medium of insight. Both intrinsic and insight symbols use images and ideas taken from narrow and more intuitible relations and use them as expressions for more universal and ideal relations which because of their pervasiveness and ideality are not directly expressible.<sup>17</sup>

According to Hegel, in the symbolical stage, art "with its yearning, its fermentation, its mystery and sublimity,"<sup>18</sup> is symbolic not in the sense in which all art may be said to depend upon a certain natural symbolism wherein emotion, thought and experience assume aesthetic meaning, but in the restricted sense which the symbol is put over against or outside of the idea or experiences.<sup>19</sup>

Symbolical art reveals man as just beginning to come to spiritual self-consciousness and to recognise himself in nature. Hence the idea is indefinite, obscure and ill comprehended. It cannot subjugate the matter to embody it. There is a defectiveness in the ideas, in the content of art, and inevitably, in the form of art.<sup>20</sup>

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17. Urban, Op. cit., p. 415.

18. Hegel, Friedrich, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, by F.P.B. Osmaston, p. 104.

19. Krox, Israël., *The aesthetic theories of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer*, pp. 85-86.

20. Ibid, p. 86.

The supreme and uniquely characteristic symbolic art is architecture. Architecture builds the temple for God, but it does not yet express him. The building and the idea, according to Hegel, which it symbolises is disparate. The ideal cannot be realized as a concrete spirituality in the material and medium of architecture. The forms of architecture are inadequate to the idea.<sup>21</sup> Thus the symbol of architecture, particularly on the temples and caves (e.g. Konark, Khajuraho, Ajanta and Ellora) are so complicated that it is very difficult to get the meaning and to describe.

### 5.3 Problems in aesthetic expression

The expression theory of art is commonly discussed by all theories of art. Art is generally an expression of human feelings. This is a view held by a large number of artists in various media (music, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, architecture, films). But what is it that is expressed? Some say that art is self-expression. "In art, the artist is expressing himself—which raises the question how his expression is different in art from what it is in laughing or crying, smiling or groaning. Others say that the artist is "expressing something about life" (not necessarily his own feelings) but is this equivalent to saying something about life? And can a composer, for example, truly be said to be saying something in his musical composition?"<sup>22</sup>

John Hospers in his *Introduction to Aesthetics* criticizes the view that art is expression, by distinguishing several senses of the crucial word 'express'. Expression in one sense is something a person does, an activity having to do with manifesting his inner feelings in some outward form or behaviour. A person may do this when he creates a work of art, just as he may do this in any other activity in which he engages. But does this tell us anything about the nature of the product thereby produced, that it is good or valuable or worth contemplating? Secondly:

21. Ibid, pp. 86-87.

22. Hospers, J.(ed.) *Aesthetics*, p. 71



'express' may also be used equivalently to 'evoke', in this sense, to say that music expresses sadness is to say merely that it evokes a feeling of sadness in me or makes me feel sad. But to say that the music evokes this response in me is not to say what the music itself is like or indeed that it will effect anyone else in the same way.<sup>23</sup>

However, the expression involves mainly two factors. One is the expression of art and other is the expression of the artist. Here I am distinguishing art from the artist. The artist generally expresses his feeling through the work of art. But feeling and emotion, which are the necessary elements of art, cannot be expressed by the artist. Secondly, the piece of art also does not express properly its meaning and idea. Thus both arts and artists are inexpressible to certain extent.

Art is the expression of emotion, but such expression neither aims at 'arousing' emotion in others, nor is it a mere 'betrayal' of the bodily changes that mark the release of normal emotion. The aesthetic experience, or artistic activity, is the experience of expressing one's emotions and that which expresses them is the total imaginative activity called indifferently language or art.

When a man is said to express an emotion, what is being said about him comes to this. At first, he is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what this emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. Thus the artistic expression is very often checked and choked due to the arousing of emotion.

The other aspect of art is the intuition. According to Benedetto Croce, art is vision or intuition. Art or beauty is nothing more than 'intuition', the preconceptual stage of thought, and so entirely distinct from material reality, from the useful, from the pleasant, from moral conduct and from conceptual knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23.</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>24.</sup> Croce, B., *The essence of aesthetics*, pp. 8-17.

For Croce, art being intuition, has no definite conceptual content. Content of intuition according to Croce, can be internal or external. But according to Kant, it could be external only and according to Hegel, internal only. The artistic intuition is free from spatial and temporal relations, according to Croce. Thus the artistic expression becomes the inner speech and not external utterance.

Another point to note here is—what exactly is the manner of communication? Generally we may say that art communicates ideas or feelings. But the same ideas and feelings are also communicated to us by letters. What a painting communicates, that is not the same in case of a letter. The content of the letter can be clearly revealed, whereas the painting or an art does not communicate its ideas or feeling in the same way.

When we say 'the rose is red', here we describe the rose, not the colour red. Similarly when we say music is sad, we only describe the music but not the sadness. The relation between the rose and its colour is certainly not expression. The rose does not express or communicate its colour. It may show it in the right light but this is not an expressive use of show.

We may admit that in a very strict sense communication of aesthetic experience and indeed of any experience is impossible without denying the force of the communication theory. Experience, and aesthetic experience is no doubt personal and private and no personal and private experience can ever literally be communicated to another one.

#### 5.4 Transcendental aesthetic

##### *Kant*

Kant is a transcendentalist in his Philosophy. He has dealt with three types of experience, viz., (1) theoretical, (2) practical and (3) aesthetic in his three critiques. The three critiques are critique of pure reason, critique of practical reason and critique:

of higher mental faculties, e.g. (1) Understanding, (2) Reason, and (3) Judgment, corresponding to the three ultimate modes of consciousness.

Aesthetic experience, according to Kant, is experience of harmony between free imagination and free understanding, bound up with the mere apprehension of the form of an object of intuition.<sup>25</sup> It is purely subjective and universally valid.

Kant is concerned with the principles of *a priori* in his *Critique of Judgment*. Aesthetic is the science of rules of sensibility in general, just as Logic is the science of rules of understanding. Kant thus partly seems to accept Baumgarten's view of aesthetic in so far as he holds that aesthetics is the science of sensible knowledge i.e. knowledge that sensibility yields. Sensuous knowledge is intuitive knowledge. It is in immediate relation to the object. It gives materials to all thought. It necessarily conforms to the *a priori* forms of sensibility, space and time. It does not represent the thing as it is. It gives us appearances only. It has no elements, which may be apprehended as common to other ideas.

The undefined object of an intuitive or sensuous knowledge as presented above, is a phenomenon. Kant's theory is that the world of our experience, the so-called phenomenal world, is the product both of something which we are presented with, and the *a priori* conditions supplied by the mind. The mind is viewed as something like a vast blank form which determines the kinds of answers that can be given, but not the specific content, which only experience can determine. The forms of intuition, the logical functions of judgment and the categories fix the necessary conditions of both experience and knowledge, but the actual content arises only from something independent of us. Thus the phenomenal world is not the real world. The content of the world is beyond our experience, which cannot be analysed and expressed.

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25. Bernard, J.H., (tr.) *Kant's Critique of Judgment*, pp. 30-33.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic, we find two forms of *a priori* knowledge—space and time, which Kant called the forms of intuition. Kant's view of space and time differed from that of the English empiricists, who have asserted that space and time can be derived only from experience. Kant asserted the opposite. Space and time are not *a posteriori*, he insisted, they are prior to experience, indeed they make experience possible. Above all, space is not an empirical concept. Kant says that space cannot be applied to the thing in itself. It is an *a priori* form of perception which underlies the phenomenal world. It is subjective, not objective.<sup>26</sup> Kant's treatment of time parallels that of space.

Kant's philosophy is the philosophy of the *a priori*. His chief contribution to aesthetics, therefore, is naturally his establishing the fundamental *a priori* principle of judgment. Aesthetic is transcendental philosophy based on principles *a priori*. In aesthetics of Kant, understanding and free-imagination both are required. So far I have discussed this understanding which is the faculty of knowledge. This faculty of knowledge which is subjective experience becomes inexpressible in the field of aesthetic. Thus the thing-in-itself is thoroughly independent of human minds. Human minds cannot know it as it is in itself.

According to Kant, imagination is of three kinds—(1) reproductive, (2) productive and (3) free or aesthetic.<sup>27</sup> Aesthetic imagination alone is free because it is independent of the laws of the understanding. It is productive and spontaneous. A beautiful object furnishes the imagination simply with such a form. Imagination, as a free productive faculty is an aspect of creative genius. It is free from the law of association, which controls empirical imagination. No definite thought or concept, however, can adequately represent a creation of free imagination. Hence aesthetic ideas which cannot be made completely intel-

26. Mayer, F., *History of Modern Philosophy*, p. 297.

27. Cassirer, H.W., *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Judgment*, p. 96.

ligible by language. In case of the creation of art, free imagination which constitutes the soul of art, cannot therefore, be adequately presented in language.

Kant divides arts into two kinds—(1) mechanical, and (2) aesthetic. He defines them as follows :

“If art (product of art) which is adequate to the cognition of a possible object performs the actions requisite therefore merely in order to make actual, it is mechanical art; but if it has for its immediate design the feeling of pleasure, it is called aesthetic art.”<sup>28</sup>

Before we proceed further with the discussion of this point it is necessary to point out that Kant's aesthetical art is of two kinds—(1) pleasant art and (2) fine art. The product of the former is simply meant to please its lovers. Cookery, for instance, may be called a pleasant art, because it is concerned with producing what is agreeable to the palate. Fine art, on the other hand, is concerned with the production of something, which does not yield mere sensuous satisfaction. A product of fine art makes us conscious of the harmony between our cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding. Its production is not controlled by an objective purpose or a definite concept.<sup>29</sup> Thus when the definite concept of fine art is not available then naturally it becomes inexpressible in our language.

Kant surveys the aesthetic judgment from the viewpoints of quality, quantity, relation and modality which are the four determinants of the beautiful.

According to quality, the judgment of Taste (that is, the pleasure which constitutes its predicate) is disinterested. Kant sums up the first moment, “Taste is the faculty of judging of an object or a method of representing it by an entirely disinterested satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called beautiful.”<sup>30</sup>

28. Kant, (Bernard, tr.), *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

29. Cassirer, *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, tr. by J.H. Bernard, p. 55.

According to quantity, 'the beautiful is that which apart from concepts is represented as the object of a universal satisfaction.'<sup>31</sup> Here Kant stresses that beautiful is the object of a universal satisfaction apart from concepts, which is the subjective. Kant's doctrine of the universality of the aesthetic judgment is based on the universality of the subjective condition by judging of objects. Thus he (Kant) sums up the second moment "the beautiful is that which pleases universally without a concept."<sup>32</sup>

According to relation "the judgment of taste has nothing at its basis but the form of purposiveness of an object (or of its mode of representation)". Kant sums up the third moment: "Beauty is the form of the purposiveness of an object, so far as this is perceived in it without any representation of a purpose."<sup>33</sup>

According to modality "the beautiful is that which without any concept is cognised as the object of a necessary satisfaction."<sup>34</sup> Here the sensuous feeling does not communicate the meanings and the realities of life in their experiential context and with their specific emotions and immanent values.

Let me summarize the four moments of Kant's aesthetic as follows: As to quality, the first moment, the aesthetic judgment is disinterested, as to quantity, second moment, it is universally valid, though subjective. As to relation, the third moment, it manifests a purposiveness without purpose and participates in cognition in general without being determined by definite concepts. As to modality, the fourth moment, it exhibits a necessity which is not apodictic but only exemplary. Thus Kant deals with a pleasure which is abstract and with a beauty which is pure.<sup>35</sup>

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31. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

35. *Konx, Op. cit.*, p. 4

*Hegel*

Hegel's Philosophy is a form of idealism. The word 'Aesthetics', taken literally is not wholly satisfactory, since 'Aesthetic' means; more precisely, the science of sensation, of feeling.<sup>36</sup> Thus art, according to Hegel, is the sensuous presentation of the Absolute or in other words art is one of the manifestations of the absolute mind of which religion and philosophy are the other two.

The absolute is the source of all things in the world. It is the nature of thought i.e. universal and since thought is the essence of mind, the Absolute is mind. It is real. This real, the universal mind, is the first principle or ultimate being, the Absolute which is the source of all things and in terms of which the universe must be explained.

Apprehension of the Absolute takes place under three modes of human mind which constitute three phases of the Absolute spirit. They are (1) Art; (2) Religion and (3) Philosophy. In art and religion some traces of finitude still cling to spirit.

Regarding the concept or idea of art, it falls under the three following heads—(1) the work of art is not a natural product, it is brought about by human activity. (2) It is essentially made for man's apprehension and in particular is drawn more or less from the sensuous field for apprehension by the senses. (3) It has an end and aim in itself.<sup>37</sup>

The ordinary notion is that the human art product ranked below the product of nature. For nature and its products, work of God, created by his goodness and wisdom, whereas the art product is a purely human work made by human hands according to human insight. In this contrast between natural production as a divine creation and human activity as something merely finite there lies directly the misunderstanding that God does not work in and through men at all but restricts the sphere of his activity to nature alone. This false opinion must be comple-

36. Hegel, G.W.F., Knox, T.M., *Hegel's Aesthetics*, vol. I, p. 1.

37. *Ibid*, p. 25.

tely rejected if we are to penetrate to the true nature of art.<sup>38</sup>

God is more honoured by what the spirit makes than by the productions and formations of nature. For not only is there something divine in man, but it is active in him in a form appropriate to the being of God in a totally different and higher manner than it is in nature. God is spirit and in man alone does the medium, through which the Divine passes, have the form of conscious and actively self-productive spirit, but in nature this medium is unconscious, the sensuous, and the external which stands far below consciousness in worth.<sup>39</sup> Hence work of fine art which is the product of human being is higher than product of nature, which is taken to be inexpressible.

Its second characteristic, viz., that it is produced for apprehension by man's senses and therefore is more or less derived from the sensuous sphere. Now it follows from this that the sensuous must indeed be present in the work of art but should appear only as the surface and as a pure appearance. For in the sensuous aspect of a work of art, the spirit seeks neither the concrete material stuff, the empirical inner completeness and development of the organism . . . nor the universal and purely ideal thought . . . the work of art stands in the middle between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought. Thus it seems in this position art becomes inexpressible.

For him (Hegel) art is the presentation of truth or spiritual reality in a sensuous form. It is a lower revelation of the same 'truth' which is more adequately grasped by religion and philosophy; or at least of some part of it, for some truths are artistically inexpressible and only attainable by reflection.<sup>40</sup>

The aim of art is to bring home to our senses our feeling, and our inspiration everything which has a place in the human spirit. That familiar saying, art is supposed to make real in us and to

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38. Ibid, p. 30.

39. Ibid, p. 30.

40. Ibid, (3) p- 38.



reveal the truth.<sup>41</sup> I doubt here how art being the Absolute can reveal itself. That art has a meaning and that it reveals something transcending our everyday experience may be granted. But what that meaning and revelation is cannot be expressed otherwise than by the work of art itself. Like Hegel, Schopenhauer also thought that aesthetic experience is a transcendental experience. It is an apprehension of an idea, which transcends the form of empirical knowledge, the forms of sensibility and understanding, time, space and causality. According to Schopenhauer, art is concerned with what is outside and independent of all relations. It reproduces eternal ideas grasped through pure contemplation.

### Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein, instead of overlooking the aesthetic, has shown his keen interest on it. His philosophical works e.g. *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, *The Blue and Brown Book* and over and above all his *Lectures and Conversation on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* contain discussions of the problems of aesthetics.

In proposition 6.421 of the *Tractatus* we read "Ethics and aesthetics are one. It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental."<sup>42</sup> Here he says that the language of ethics and aesthetics are on the same level.

Here the question is what is this transcendental character of aesthetics. Wittgenstein describes this in his *Lectures on Ethics* by showing how value essentially transcends the factual domain. Evaluative words like 'good' and 'beautiful' for him, can be used in both a 'trivial' or 'relative' sense as against the 'ethical' or 'absolute sense'. For Wittgenstein, the peculiarity of normative aesthetics lies in this absolutistic usage of value words. This normative usage transcends the limits of language for scientific

41. Carritt, E.F., *The theory of Beauty*, p. 103.

42. Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, Nos. 6.421, 6.42, pp. 147, 145.

language can only reveal the factual.<sup>43</sup>

Ethics and Aesthetics are used in the absolute sense. Wittgenstein says that for all I wanted to do with them was just to go beyond the world and that is to say beyond significant language.<sup>44</sup> The above make it very clear that there cannot be a possibility of formulating operational definitions of the evaluative concepts of aesthetics. For any absolutistic usage of concepts like the beautiful, the good etc. cannot be translated into any particular empirical sense. Thus Wittgenstein makes it very clear that no essential definitions of general concepts are possible. He illustrated this problem by the example of the word 'game'. In case of games there is no essence or common element to them. What holds about the concept of 'game' applies to all aesthetic concepts. Aesthetic concepts like 'beautiful', 'ugly' etc. defy any essential and common definitions. One cannot enumerate any essential characteristics of 'beautiful' or 'ugly' things.

"One of the most interesting points which the question of not being able to describe is connected with (is that) the impression which a certain verse or bar in music gives you is indescribable." "I do not know what it is . . . Look at this transition . . . what is it? I think you would say it gives you experiences which cannot be described. First of all it is of course, not true that whenever we hear a piece of music or line of poetry which impresses us greatly, we say, 'this is indescribable.' But it is true that again and again we do feel inclined to say 'I cannot describe my experience.'<sup>45</sup>

He says that in music we get certain images, organic feelings, emotions and impressions etc. but 'we still do not know how to analyse this impression.'<sup>46</sup>

43. Wittgenstein, L., 'A Lecturer on Ethics'. *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. LXXIV (1965), p. 7.

44. Ibid, p. 11.

45. Barret, C. (ed.), *Lectures and Conversation on Aesthetics Psychology and Religious Belief*, p. 37.

46. Ibid, p. 38.

In Wittgenstein's 'Lectures in 1930-33' G.F. Moore says that for Wittgenstein there is no causal connection in aesthetics. Because, he said in aesthetics investigations the one thing we are not interested in is causal connections, whereas this is the only thing we are interested in Psychology'. To ask 'why is this beautiful?' is not to ask for a causal explanation : that e.g. to give a causal explanation in answer to the question, why is the smell of a rose pleasant? would not remove our 'aesthetic puzzlement.'<sup>47</sup>

The view of Wittgenstein and Plato are different so far as the problem of art is concerned. But both approaches to the question 'what is art'? lead in effect to the same conclusion namely that art is indefinable. The Platonist approach leads to this result since it makes of art a metaphysical essence which cannot be specified or ordinarily known. By contrast, on Wittgenstein approach art is indefinable because it is argued that there is no one thing of which art is the name.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Osborne, H., *Aesthetics, Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33*, by G.E. Moore, p. 87.

48. Diffey, T.J., 'On Defining Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1979, p. 17.

## PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

### 6.1 Private language

Philosophy is not a study of the structure of facts but a purely linguistic investigation. Here I would like to discuss the problem of private language in the light of main thesis. In fact, this problem of language has become controversial in the recent philosophy of language.

The notion of a private language, according to Wittgenstein is, one that it is understood by one person only. By 'private' is meant that no one other than the speaker could understand it. Because 'the individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking to his immediate sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.'<sup>1</sup> This definition of Wittgenstein includes not only sensation, but everything that has been called a 'mental act'. This private language notion cannot be taught to or learned by anyone other than the speaker, because it is a language which a particular person employs to refer to his own experience.

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1. Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, Sec. 243, p. 84.

According to the Cartesian view, all sensations, feelings and other psychological states are private. The Cartesian philosopher assumes that words for sensation and feelings come to have the meaning they do in much the same way as words for things like chairs and tables acquire their meaning. There is just one difference. In the case of sensations and feelings, all public features including behaviour and observable circumstances of the person who has the sensations of feelings in question, will be irrelevant so far as the meaning of the word is concerned. The relevant features will all be private. The Cartesian thinker assumes that this presents no problems, for he thinks that just as you can have a public acquaintance with a private object, so also you can have a private acquaintance with a private object, such as your own tooth-ache. That is how there can be words for private, just as there are words for public objects.

Wittgenstein has made objections to the Cartesian view of language. He finds that our understanding of language is such that the private language is impossible. Descartes' epistemological and psychological innovations are well summed up in his own dictum that mind is better known than the body. When Descartes's innovation was to identify the mental with private, Wittgenstein's contribution was to separate the two. Wittgenstein has refuted the Cartesian dualism. He pointed out that Descartes did not reflect on the nature of language. Secondly the clear and distinct perception of pain is not in fact identifiable separately from the occurrence of pain and the judgement about the origin of the pain. Whereas on the other hand there seem to be three separate elements in Descartes's account, namely, the pain, the perception of the pain and the judgement about the pain. The perception of the pain seems to be something distinct from the pain, for there are properties such as clarity and distinctness which belong to the perception but not to the pain. The perception seems to be something distinct from the judgement: a judgement is an act of the will.

that it would be impossible to learn the words for sensations if sensations had no bodily expression. If that were so, Descartes would seem to be able to avoid criticism by pleading that the knowledge exercised in the perception of sensations was innate.

The conception of a private language that Wittgenstein attacks is not the conception of a language that only the speaker does understand, but a language that no other person can understand (Inv. 243). "Strawson thinks that Wittgenstein has not refuted the conception of a private language but has only shown that certain conditions must be satisfied if a common language is to exist. Strawson appears to believe that each of us not only can have but does have a private language of sensations, that if we are to understand one another when we speak of our sensations there must be criteria for the use of our sensation-words."<sup>2</sup> At many places in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives descriptions of various sensations are not observed, in Strawson's sense. Private language cannot be the under structure of the language we all understand. 'In Strawson's conception, sensation-words were supposed to perform two functions—to refer and to communicate. But if the reference is incommunicable, then what they do communicate<sup>3</sup> will be irrelevant.'

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, 256-270, Wittgenstein does seem to be presenting an argument against private language in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*. He writes—"Let us imagine the following case—I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign 'E' and write this sign in a calender for every day on which I have the sensation. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Here Hector-Neri-Castaneda in his essay, 'The private Language Argument as a *Reductio ad Absurdum*' has pointed out

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2. Malcolm, N., 'Exposition and criticism of Wittgenstein's Investigations', *The Private Language Argument*, ed. O.R. Jones, p. 36.
  3. Ibid, p. 37.
  4. Wittgenstein, L., Op. cit., Sec. 258.

that 'the assumption for the private language argument cannot be that a man is trying to keep a diary with only the sign 'E'. We must assume that he has at his disposal a set of signs inter-related by means of a network of merely linguistic rules and a good deal more.'<sup>5</sup>

Wittgenstein's definition makes the privacy of the language depend solely on the privacy of the objects the language is used to think about. From the above definition, however it does not follow that, e.g. a private language cannot have a single word in common with a public language.

According to Castaneda 'private object' has several senses viz, (1) one which the speaker alone can (logically can) have experience of or be acquainted with; (2) an object whose existence is (logically) determinable by the speaker alone.'<sup>6</sup> But Wittgenstein attacked the mixed languages which involve the idea of a private object in any of the senses.

Castaneda's point is that Wittgenstein's discussion relates to the assumption that privatus (person who speaks and writes private language) wrote the isolated symbol 'E' or a calendar, while he is not given the privilege of using the rest of Privatish (which is 'private, contains several logical signs). Castaneda concedes that Wittgenstein's suggested arguments are effective in showing the absurdity of private language of certain species; with no logical terms, with only one rule, with only one sign 'E' etc. But by (1) and (2) above it is a mistake to conclude from this alone that those arguments dispose of the other species, or that there is no other species to consider.

According to Castaneda, it is not clear that Wittgenstein is concerned with the issue between a public and absolutely private language. Very naturally, one would expect to find many cases of private language all linked up by series of family resemblances. The idea of a private language is so obscure that there are many

5. Castaneda, H.N., 'The private language argument as a *reductio ad absurdum*', *The private language argument* ed. by O.R. Jones, p. 136.

6. *Ibid.*, as (last page), p. 137.

senses of privacy. It is likely that our language of pains is in fact at least a mixed language, since at least some pains are probably private as required by the strong principle, even though we are unable to tell which one's are private.

Castaneda stated that 'if for the purpose of a *reductio ad absurdum* it is fully assumed that *privatus* possesses a private language i.e. a whole system of symbols whose use is interrelated, habits of using such symbols and enough private objects which manifest sufficient regularities then *Privatus* has everything which is a necessary condition at issue for the possession of a language.<sup>7</sup>

Castaneda undertakes to examine the private language argument as it is sketched on Wittgenstein's behalf, by Prof. Malcolm and he claims that when the argument is properly set out, it is seen to be either question-begging or inconclusive. He thinks that the private language argument of Wittgenstein could not succeed anyway, since its conclusion is false, private languages exist, hence are possible.

Prof. J.F. Thomson agrees with Castaneda that it is not clear at all what the private language argument is supposed to come to or what its assumption and its reasoning is. He formulated the condition that if a man has a pain it is possible for him to know something about his pain which is impossible that anyone else should know.

Dr. Hervey's complaint against Wittgenstein is that he is moving in the behaviorist direction. Wittgenstein perhaps hopes to dissolve the problem by interpreting linguistic expression of sensations as part of sensation-behaviour manifested in a particular setting, or situation and not as describing anything. It might be asked whether he has not simply shifted the problem. However successful might be the attempt to interpret verbal expressions of pain as pain behaviour, this pain behaviour is still a manifestation of pain and there seems to remain something

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 149.



unanalysed.<sup>8</sup>

Prof. C.W.K. Mundle also explicitly develops the charge that Wittgenstein's view is behaviourist, and attempts to undermine Wittgenstein's alleged behaviourism by attacking the private language argument. However, Wittgenstein did not adopt the crudest kind of behaviourism denying the occurrence of private experience (*Inv.* 308) Such a denial would be vacuous according to his theory of meaning. He does, however, make statements which it is difficult to interpret otherwise than as asserting that nothing can be said about private experience. The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said. (*Inv.* 304)

Wittgenstein seems to have thought that private experiences can have no place in the language game i.e. that we cannot talk about private experiences. His "beetle" argument would establish that you can never know what, if anything, another person is referring to when he talks about his private experiences. Because in his arguments he invites us to suppose that everyone has a box with something in it, which we call a "beetle" but no one can look into anyone else's box and every one says he knows what a "beetle" is only by looking at his beetle (*Inv.* 293).

Thus Wittgenstein seems to be defining 'private language' as a language in which communication is impossible. He says 'other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations only from my behaviour, for I cannot be said to learn of them' (*Inv.* 246).

In Wittgenstein's notes for lectures on *Private Experience and Sense data*, he has pointed out what one calls 'describing a feeling to some one'? 'This pain I call "tooth-ache" and I can never make him understand what it means.' But we are under the impression that we can point to the pain as it were unseen by the other person and name it. He says I know what I mean by "tooth-ache" but the other person cannot know it. "Tooth-ache" is a word which I use in a game which I play with words. "tooth-ache" entirely depends upon there being a behaviour

8. Jones, O.R. (ed.), *The Private Language Argument*, p. 80.

which we call the expression of tooth-ache. To give a sensation a name means nothing unless I know already in what sort of a game this name is to be used. The language games with expressions of feelings are based on games with expressions of which we do not say that they may lie. If I say we must assume an expression which cannot lie, this cannot be explained by saying that pain corresponds to this expression. In 'I have tooth-ache' the expression of pain is brought to the same form as a description 'I have 5 shilling.'<sup>9</sup>

In the above discussion Wittgenstein has explained the nature of private language as one which holds that the feeling of sensation which is subjective that cannot be adequately described to others. But ultimately he pointed out that the expression of pain e.g., 'tooth ache' can be brought to the same form as description 'I have 5 shillings'. So his view is that 'private language is impossible.' But I think that the pain sensation of 'tooth-ache' cannot be brought to the same form as a description 'I have 5 shillings.' One can very well observe and show to others that he has 5 shillings, but he cannot observe or show his pain to others. If at all he tries to express his pain to others he would not be successful in explaining the exact nature of pain either adequately or properly to others.

On the other hand, A.J. Ayer admits that there can be private languages. A language may be said to be private when it is devised to enable a limited number of persons to communicate with one another in a way that is not intelligible to anyone outside the group. By this criterion, thieves' slang and family jargons are private languages. From this point of view, what makes a language private is simply the fact that it satisfies the purpose of being intelligible only to a single person or to a restricted set of people. What philosophers usually seem to have in mind when they speak of a private language is one that is, in their view, necessarily private, in as much as it is used by

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9. Wittgenstein, L., 'Private experience and sense data', *O.R. Jones*, Op. cit., pp. 234, 246.

some particular person to refer only to his own private experiences. If a person could limit himself to describing his own sensations or feelings then strictly speaking, only he would understand what he was saying, his utterance might indirectly convey some information to others, but it could not mean to them exactly what it meant to him.<sup>10</sup>

Imagine a Robinson Crusoe left alone on his island while still an infant, having not yet learned to speak. He will certainly be able to recognise many things upon the island, in the sense that he adapts his behaviour to them. There may be psychological grounds for doubting whether such a solitary being would in fact invent a language. The development of language, it may be argued, is a social phenomenon. But surely it is not self-contradictory to suppose that someone makes up a language for himself. After all some human being must have been the first to use a symbol. And even if he did so as a member of a group, in order to communicate with other member, even if his choice of symbols was socially conditioned it is at least conceivable that it should originally have been a purely private enterprise.<sup>11</sup>

Besides, A.J. Ayer argues that tables are public, since it makes sense to say that several people are perceiving the same table. In this sense, headaches are private for it does not make sense to say that several people are feeling the same headache.

There are some critics e.g. Mr. R. Rhees and others who criticise the view of A.J. Ayer on the ground that a language must consist of rules, and there could be nothing to show that a Crusoe was following rules and there could be rather than simply behaving with regularity. But Rhees is not correct so far as Wittgenstein's impure language game, private sense data and family resemblance is concerned. Beside Castaneda has concluded in his essay "The private language Argument as a *Reductio Absurdum*" as following :

10. Ayer, A.J., Could language be invented by a Robinson Crusoe ? or Is there private language ?, O.R. Jones (ed.) pp. 50-51.

11. Ibid, pp. 56-57.

There is an insight in saying that language is a set of rules; but it is misleading to say that to use language is to obey or follow rules. For the most part of one's action exhibits certain regularities, which one would describe as actions in accordance with certain rules. But one is not obeying or trying to follow a rule. If an action is successful i.e. if there are no unexpected obstacles, there is no question about having followed a rule correctly.<sup>12</sup>

But Rush Rhees' criticism of A.J. Ayer is not totally without point. Because, Ayer unfortunately made use of the example of a Robinson Crusoe which is irrelevant since he would have already learnt a public language in his infancy.

On the whole Wittgenstein's thesis—that a person cannot even to himself talk about his own private experiences, has been confused with the other question whether there can be a private language. Can a person meaningfully talk to himself or others about his own private experiences? Here Wittgenstein gave his negative answer to the above question. Thus he says that 'although you cannot tell me exactly what happens inside you, you can nevertheless tell me something general about it. By saying e.g. that you are having an impression which cannot be described.'<sup>13</sup>

I think, Wittgenstein has been widely misunderstood on the private language issue. Moreover, private language arguments of different philosophers are no doubt misleading, confusing and not at all clear. There is a confusion between sensation or privacy and private language. But however, I think that Wittgenstein is right stating that private language is impossible. Like Wittgenstein, Russell once said of our sensation and images that they "cannot even theoretically be observed by any one else."<sup>14</sup>

A. J. Ayer is also contradicting his own views regarding private

. Jones, O.R., Op. cit., pp. 145-146.

13. Jones, I.R. (ed.) Op. cit., L. Wittgenstein, 'private Experience and Sense-data', p. 3.

. Russell, 'The Analysis of Mind', p. 117.

language when he writes : "The question whether an object is public or private is fundamentally a question of conventions which we follow in making judgments of identity. Thus physical objects are public because it makes sense to say of different people that they are perceiving the same physical object ; mental images are private because it does not make sense to say of different people that they are having the same mental image, they can be imagining the same thing, but it is impossible that their respective mental images should be literally the same.<sup>15</sup>

Thus we can conclude after analysing the arguments of private language of different philosophers e.g. Wittgenstein, Russell, Ayer, Malcolm, Castaneda, Rhees, Harvey and Thomson, that when we attempt to talk our private sensation, we cannot tell or communicate exactly what happens inside.

## 6.2 Problems of communication

The problem of communication becomes a very primitive and age-old problem for human beings. It gives rise to a question, how can we make ourselves understood by means of language ? How can it be known that two persons are attaching same meaning to a particular word ? We are inclined to say that when two people attach the same meaning to a word, of course the same mental processes must occur in both their minds on hearing or uttering. When for example, they both realise what is meant by the word 'red', each must have a characteristic experience of the same sort. This characteristic experience—image, idea or whatever it may be, is what constitutes understanding the meaning. However, if we were asked whether really the same experience must take place every time we use the word 'red' significantly, we should probably admit that this was not so. The images and ideas associated with the word may well vary with the person using the word and the occasion on which it is used. How then does it come about that in all these different mental acts we grasp always the same meaning ?

15. Ayer, A.J., *The problem of knowledge*, p. 280.

With regard to the above problem C.I. Lewis says that we use language to convey thoughts. If language really conveys anything, then there must be something identical in your mind and in mine when we understand each other.<sup>16</sup> And here he appears to assume that what is identical in two minds in communication is a certain mental state.

If we adopt this theory then we are immediately involved in difficulties that have greatly puzzled philosophers. Can I be at all sure that other peoples' experiences are the same as or similar to mine? What I see or sensibly perceive when they talk to me are only the signs that they use, how can I know whether behind these signs there is the same experience? Could it not be the case, for example, that another person had quite a different experience from mine whenever he sees green, and yet that this difference never came to light since he used the word in daily life exactly as I did.

The possibility of such a state of affairs is strongly insisted on by Schlick. He raises the question: If I show someone else a green leaf, does he see green in the same way that I do? Is his experience of colour the same as mine? His answer is: 'It is usually admitted... that it is for ever impossible to find out whether or not two people have the same data of 'consciousness' in their minds.'<sup>17</sup> If I am not sure whether another person has experiences of the same kind as I have, it follows that I can never be sure whether he attaches to the word the same meaning as I do.

Schlick says that 'if two individuals would say that they were seeing with their eyes and hearing with their ears, they would call the objects and the qualities by the same names, their judgments, about all similarities and differences of sound, colours, sizes etc., would agree in every respect, in short, they would understand each other, perfectly. And yet in spite of all this, the content of all their experiences and thoughts would be absolutely

16. Lewis, C.I., *Mind and the world order*, p. 69.

17. Waismann, F., *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*, p. 241.

and incomparably different...they would be living in two entirely different worlds of content. Thus we see that there may be complete understanding between individuals even if there is no similarity between the contents of their minds and we conclude that understanding and meaning are quite independent of content and have nothing whatever to do with it.<sup>18</sup>

If what Schlick says is right, we are led to a new and radically different way of looking on our problem. If communication depends only on the various external conditions under which colour words are used and not on the experienced content associated with them, then the experience we have of colours forms no part of the communicable meaning of our words. The peculiar experience of a person on looking at a green leaf is eternally private and can never be made accessible to anyone else. It is inexpressible and defies all attempts to communicate it, what then is communicated by such a word as 'green' ?<sup>19</sup>

In answering this question Schlick introduces the notion of structure. 'Every quality (for instance, the qualities of sensation, sound, smell, heat etc. as well as colour) is inter-connected with all others by internal relations which determine its place in the system of qualities. The quality has a certain logical structure. In this way Schlick comes to the conclusion that only structure can be communicated and that content is inexpressible. Whenever words like 'colour, sound, feeling etc.' occur in our sentences they can never stand for content. They have meaning only so far as they stand for certain structures.'<sup>20</sup>

Schlick's remarks no doubt contain an important insight. What is right in the theory of structures is that everything that is necessary for mutual understanding must be laid down in the rules for the use of language. Whenever two people use such a word as 'green' in the same way, that word has the same meaning for both of them. What Schlick calls the 'structure of green' is

18. Ibid, p. 242.

19. d, p. 242.

20. bid, p. 243.

embodied in the grammar of the word 'green'.<sup>21</sup> Here Schlick has given more emphasis on the use and grammar of the language.

Everything now seems to be clear. But this clearness is only apparent for a difficulty arises again as soon as we ask ourselves what does it mean to say that two people use the word 'green' in the same way? Are only external circumstances of the use of the word to be counted? Should, then, our criterion for 'using in the same way' consist in this: that two people agree in the names they give to the colours of various objects? Or should we say that besides this they must have the same inner experience when they both look at a green surface? The philosophical difficulties connected with the question, 'what is communicable'? arise from the second interpretation. Waismann says that 'even if two persons' use of language coincides as far as describing of external objects is concerned, this gives no guarantee at all that they attach the same meaning to their words, for inspite of that, their experience may be quite different. Only if it were possible to look directly into another man's mind could I find out whether or not he attached the same meaning to his words. And yet this is logically impossible.<sup>22</sup>

Thus as long as we think only of the outer conditions of communication, everything seems clear to us, as soon as we contemplate the inner ones certainty begin to dwindle. The problem seems in a sense, to be a scientific one, it concerns the nature of communication.

How is communication possible, since it is uncertain whether two people have the same experience on looking at 'green leaf'? The confusion is already present in the way the question is put.

For what does the 'same experience' mean here? How are we to understand the word 'same' in this context? For what is the criterion for the word 'same' having identical meaning? Is it

21. Ibid, pp. 243-44.

22. Ibid, pp. 244-45.



When the word is used in two contexts according to the same rules that the meaning is said to be identical? However, the word 'like' can be the alternative meaning of the word 'same'. I think that there are three kinds of meaning in our communication viz., (i) utterance meaning, which is referred to a particular situation and its use etc., (ii) sentence meaning that is the grammars, rules and meaning of words and (iii) mental meaning which is the subjective affair of the person. Thus when we get three different meanings with reference to a particular statement then it becomes very confusing and vague to have a definite and 'same' meaning. For example when you say 'you are in pain', then it is beyond the criterion of testability and verifiability. As a matter of fact the communication is a problem in Philosophy. Besides, inadequate language, normative and subjective values and emotions are the factors which are incommunicable.

Private language refers to private sensation e.g., pain which is incommunicable too. The thesis that pains are incommunicable is a conjunction of two separable thesis—(i) I can know that I am in pain; (ii) other people cannot know that I am in pain. Sometimes philosophers claim that one man can never really know of another's pain, because they fail to distinguish between incommunicability and inalienability. They assume that to know pain is to have pain, and they believe that one person cannot have another's pain. The pain is a subjective feeling of the men. One cannot accurately and properly describe his own pain also. Under these conditions it is not possible to know another's pain. But the impossibility they have in mind is not a mere matter of fact impossibility. The mean that it makes no sense to say that A knows B's pain. For instance, if A knows B's pain to a certain extent, then it does not function as a form of communication.

### 6.3 The limits of my language mean the limits of my world (T 5'6)

Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* says 'the limits of my language

mean the limits of my world (T 5.6). The use of the pronoun 'my' to modify 'language' and 'world' implicitly introduces the notion of solipsism. It emerges completely in the succeeding remarks where Wittgenstein identifies language with 'my language' and world with 'my world', and the latter with the subject.

Wittgenstein says : 'Logic pervades the world : the limits of the world are also its limits. We cannot think what we cannot think ; so what we cannot think we cannot say either (T 56.1).' This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism 'For what the solipsist means is quite correct only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest. The world is my world : this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world (T 5.62)'. Here the argument is 'the limits of my language mean the limits of my world, but all languages have one and the same logic, and its limits are those of the world, therefore the limits of my world and of the world are one and the same ; therefore the world is my world (T 5.6 and 5.61).

Wittgenstein's argument for solipsism can be summarised as follows :

1. the limits of language are the limits of the subject (i.e. there is only one language I can understand) ;
2. The limits of the world are the limits of language ;
3. Therefore, the limits of the world are the limits of the subject (i.e. the world is the my world).

The first thing to note is that what Wittgenstein thought solipsism intends to say is entirely different from philosophers e.g. Descartes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, usually take it to say. When Wittgenstein says that solipsism is correct he has his peculiar interpretation of solipsism in mind which can only be understood in the context of the other doctrines of the *Tractatus*.

'Wittgenstein identifies the limits of one's language with the limits of one's self. What he is concerned with is not the empirical subject but the 'metaphysical' subject discussed in philosophy. Hence the only way of drawing the limits of the metaphysical

subject seems to be to identify them with the limits of my language.<sup>23</sup>

In Wittgenstein's solipsism the world is not said to be a content of the subject—it is not in the subject. Conversely, the subject cannot be said to have the world in itself, as, for example, one has an idea in one's mind. To speak in this way, implies, an altogether illegitimate separation of the subject and the world such that they appear to be distinct, and independent entities. Such a view holds that since all that exists are my ego and its contents so called other ego and their supposed contents do not exist. Everything exists as an object for me, and my point of view or relation towards the world is the only one possible. This view arises firstly from the recognition of the truism that what I know (I know what I think, or what I experience) and secondly from the belief that I know is something over and above that which is known. Thus the world belongs to, is an attribute of, the I. The world exists for me thus means the world exists in me.

When we say, in the analysis of Wittgenstein's solipsism that all that exists are my ego, it means only what I experience exists, what I do not experience does not exist. It means that only one's own self (ego) and what one experiences exist.

If one thinks 'I am the only I: the world, including all the people in it, is essentially an object of experience, and therefore my experience,' Wittgenstein says: what is intended here is right, but it cannot be said (5.62 *Tractatus*).

It is possible to read the *Tractatus* and believe that Wittgenstein is a solipsist in something like the above sense. But James C. Morrison in his book *Meaning and Truth in Wittgenstein's Tractatus* describes the solipsism of Wittgenstein in a different form. His analysis of "the world is my world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world" (5.62 *Tractatus*) and 'there is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains

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23. Morrison, J.C., *Meaning and truth in Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 133.

ideas' (5.631 *Tractatus*) is as follows : 'The subject for Wittgenstein is not a 'thing' (e.g. a substance, that has ideas. The relation of the subject to the world may be illustrated by the concept of a circle in geometry. The subject limits the world just as the line forming the circumference of a circle limits the area of that circle. We cannot ask whether the circumference of a circle is in the circle as a part of its area—or is 'outside' it—not a part of its area. . . .It is merely a limit which functions as the determinant of the area of a circle. For Wittgenstein, the world is limited by the subject in the same way. The subject can neither be said to be inside (a part) of the world (as in materialism) nor outside it (as in some forms of idealism). Rather the subject is the world.<sup>24</sup>

The above implies that the subject, then, is always both 'in' the world and 'outside' the world in so far as it is neither the one nor the other. This paradox becomes a truism when properly understood. To my mind it seems that the subject which remains inside the world can be partly expressed and the subject which is outside the world it cannot be expressed. Here 'my world' means the both 'in' and 'outside' the subject of the world. But the 'limits of my world' means the subject 'outside' the world. And the limit of language is applicable to this 'limits of my world'. The subject that lies 'outside' the world is metaphysical, and it is not a fact in the world. Thus for Wittgenstein, Schopenhauer's idealism—the world is my idea—and has own solipsism—the world is my world—both reduce to realism. Wittgenstein says 'here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension (T 5.64).

Moreover, although the doctrines of solipsism—or 'pure realism' cannot be expressed (gesagt) its truth is (manifest) i.e. it shows (Zeigt) itself (5.62 *Tractatus*). It is also perhaps worth noting that Wittgenstein is denying the existence of the metaphy-

24. Morrison. J.C., *Meaning and Truth in Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 134.

sical self, which is not a thing, object or fact. He says: 'the philosophical self (Ich) . . . is the metaphysical subject, the limits of the world—not a part of it (T 5.641) and hence it cannot be described.

Hintikka says, "Perhaps a more natural way of saying that Wittgenstein identified the metaphysical subject with a totality of propositions, would be to say that he identified with a totality of thoughts. The thought is the significant proposition (T 4.0). The limits of the metaphysical subject cannot be the limit of one's actual thought for there is nothing necessary about that limitation. The only necessary limits are the general limits of language."<sup>25</sup>

Indeed Wittgenstein's solipsism is often held to be irrefutable, but too absurd to be concerned with. It is not easy to understand Wittgenstein's use of 'I' and the idea of 'the limits', because his writings are extraordinarily compressed and it is necessary to ponder each word in order to understand his sentences. According to Hintikka, Wittgenstein does not mean by solipsism what is ordinarily meant by it. But his solipsism can be considered true in a sense, that is, what solipsism intends to say is quite correct, but since we cannot speak of the metaphysical ego—this cannot be said.

#### 6.4 What can be shown, cannot be said (412.12)

I will now consider the above statement of Wittgenstein which becomes the truth of solipsism. What can be shown in language cannot be said, Wittgenstein states here. But this statement seems to be contradicted at 4.022 of *Tractatus* according to which a sentence 'shows how things stand, if it is true and says that they do so stand'. Obviously Wittgenstein uses the word 'show', (*Zeigen*) in two different senses: in one sense of 'show', sentences say what they show, in another they cannot say what they 'show'.

[25. Hintikka, J., On Wittgenstein's solipsism, *Mind* 1958, January, p. 91.]

We can thus distinguish between two kinds of 'showing' in regard to logical pictures. On the one hand, a picture 'shows' by the external structure of the picture—field and by means of the key of interpretation a state of affairs that it presents or depicts: on the other hand it 'shows'—according to Wittgenstein—by the internal structures of its elements. And what it shows in the latter sense, it cannot 'show' in the former sense, because the possibility of 'showing' in the former sense presupposes that the elements of the prototype have what the internal structure 'shows' in the latter sense.

Wittgenstein says 'A picture can only "show" or "exhibit" the internal structure of reality but not depict it (2.172, *Tractatus*). The internal structure of the system of elements consists of the 'logical form' of the different elements. What a picture can only 'show' but not depict is thus the logical form of the elements of the prototype (T4.12)

The showing of what can be 'shown' and said is an 'external' showing whereas the showing of what can only be 'shown' but not said is an internal showing.

A sentence shows by its external structure how things stand 'if it is true' and says that they do so stand. It describes reality as having the same external structure as the sentence itself. But what a sentence 'shows' by its external structure must be distinguished from what it 'shows' by the internal structure of its elements. We must infer, on the one hand, that the internal structure of reality can only be 'shown' or exhibited by language but not described by sentences. We thus arrive at the conclusion that the internal structure of reality can only be shown or exhibited by language, not described in sentences.

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein states the sign 'E' and he also describes that the sign 'E' cannot be stated. He claims that what he says cannot be said. The private language argument sign 'E' is not a solitary instance but the *Tractatus* is full of statements that could not possibly be constructed as truth functions of elementary propositions that are not descriptive propositions

about state of affairs that are not propositions of natural science. What about propositions of logic, mathematics, ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics and religion? Wittgenstein's analysis of the theory of language concludes that propositions of logic, ethics, aesthetics and religion etc. do not say anything. They are attempts to transcend in language, the limits of language and hence the world. Thus according to Wittgenstein all these propositions cannot be said, but can be shown.

Philosophical propositions are neither 'empirical' nor 'logical'. They are, according to Wittgenstein, attempts to say things which cannot be said. Most of the propositions and questions arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. According to the *Tractatus* all that can be said is how really is (i.e. that certain atomic facts exist and that certain others do not). Nothing can be significantly said about what reality is (T 3.221), which is precisely what metaphysicians attempt to talk about.

"Propositions can express nothing of what is higher" (T 6.42). Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but non-sensical (T 4.003). His point is—these philosophical propositions are not false. They do not mis-state facts which could be correctly stated, for they do not state or mis-state any facts at all. They merely look like propositions but are in reality not propositions in the strict sense. In the attempt to say something about what is transcendent, the propositions become inexpressible.

According to Stenius, Wittgenstein would not have said the all philosophical statements were non-sensical. The distinction between depicting and non-depicting sentences conforms well to the distinction between sense and non-sense. As for the external structure of reality, we can describe it in a depicting language. But our need for non-depicting language can therefore be said to be of three kinds—

1. To make statements as to how language works.
2. To make statements on the internal structure of reality or language. It shows its own internal structure and in conse-

quence also the internal structure of reality. We need not describe them.

3. To make statements on what can neither be 'shown' nor 'said'. But if we understand how language works we see that such statements are non-sensical in a remarkable degree.<sup>26</sup>

George Pitcher also supported the view of Stenius. 'He says that Wittgenstein does not mean his assertions are sheer non-sense, nor does he mean that they are obfuscating non-sense, like the pseudo-propositions of some metaphysics. Wittgenstein considers his philosophical assertions to be illuminating non-sense what he had intended to say is quite true—only as it turns out, it cannot be said.'<sup>27</sup>

But the limits of thought and expression cannot themselves be thought or expressed, for this presupposes transcending those limits, i.e. thinking the unthinkable and saying the unsayable. Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be put into words can be put clearly (T 4.116). It means that here Wittgenstein has restricted the expression of thought. Thus here is the question of what can be said and what cannot be said, which is the entire basic theme of the system of the *Tractatus*. In reply to Russell's comments, Wittgenstein says that 'the main point is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by propositions i.e. by language (and what comes to the same, what can be thought) and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown (gezeigt), which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.'<sup>28</sup> But this logical form of language can only be shown—is mystical—and cannot be put into words (gesagt).

However, how can mystical things be shown? If a mystical subject is something 'higher and beyond' then it cannot be shown. And what cannot be shown cannot be said. Thus certain philosophical statements are neither 'shown' nor 'said' and they are

26. Stenius, E., *Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 208.

27. Pitcher, G., *Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, pp. 154-55.

28. Anscombe, G.E.M., *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, p. 161.



non-sensical to a certain degree. Although there is a distinction between saying and showing in *Tractatus*, what is shown (pictorial form) and hence cannot be said and what can be said is not shown are not similar to each other.

### 6.5 What we cannot speak about we must consign to silence (*Tractatus* 7)

This last proposition of Wittgenstein is remarkably similar to his 'sense (Sinn) in the preface of the *Tractatus*. The whole sense of the *Tractatus* might be summed up in the following words: 'What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must consign to silence.'<sup>29</sup>

What can be said i.e. the proposition of natural science, can be said clearly, what cannot be said—the mystica, can only be shown. To try to say what cannot be said but only shown results in non-sense. Thus we must be silent.

'Silence' here should not be interpreted to mean complete silence in the ordinary sense of not uttering any sound. Silence here means do not say (in the special sense) and therefore his advice is simply: Do not try to say what cannot be said for what can be shown, cannot be said (T 4.1212).

As a matter of fact the 'silence' of Wittgenstein is not ineffable. When Wittgenstein determined to be silent he turned away from philosophy and tried to enter an active life. Because Philosophy is not a body of doctrine, but an activity [4.122(2) T]. But he observed that most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but non-sensical. Consequently we cannot answer any questions of this kind. . . . Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language.<sup>30</sup>

Thus it is clear that A. Ramsay's famous remark, 'what we

29. Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, p. 3.

30. Wittgenstein, L., *Op. cit.*, (4.003).

cannot say we cannot and we cannot whistle it either<sup>31</sup> misses Wittgenstein's point completely. Wittgenstein's inexpressible—that which is really important—cannot be said, but only shown. There are unlimited ways to show the inexpressible. For example, logic can show the limits of the world by arranging symbols in a certain way. Music and art can show something important by arranging sounds and colours in a certain way. Singing, acting and even whistling are possible ways of showing. Though the mystical can be shown, Wittgenstein does not tell us much as to how it is shown, because his central concern, in the *Tractatus*, is merely to show that it cannot be said.

While explaining the role of Philosophy, Wittgenstein mentioned that 'Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thought' [T 4.112 (1)]. He has also given emphasis to the view that 'Philosophy does not result in "philosophical propositions" but rather in the clarification of propositions [4.112 (4) T.] So also he says that proposition can express nothing of what is higher (T 6.42). "There are, indeed things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are mystical" (T 6.522).

Thus the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* are concerned to mark out the limits of sense to indicate the boundry between what can intelligibly be said and what cannot be said (Silence).

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31. Ramsay, F.P., *The Foundation of Mathematics*, p. 238.

## CONCLUSION

In this work I have tried to explain what is inexpressible is in sense different from that of complete mystical silence. Generally we observe this sort of limitation of expression in religious language, ethics and aesthetics, and the language of Philosophy.

I have attempted to consider the problem of inexpressibility in religious language from the point of view of Indian Philosophy.

According to Śaṅkara, in advaita Vedānta, the 'nirgūṇa-Brahman' which is real and ultimate has neither name nor form, transcends merits and demerits, is beyond time, space and the object of sense-experience. It is Supreme, beyond the power of speech to express.<sup>1</sup> Even if we attempt to describe Brahman, which has neither name and form, it becomes futile. Because Brahman is without any characteristic and unknowable through our discursive thought. Vedānta recognises the functions and limitations of language and words, and as the mind and intellect cannot perform their function of describing the world of experi-

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1. Otto, R., *Mysticism East and West*, p. xvii.

ence, without the help of words and language, it maintains that the highest reality transcends words and language which seeks to describe it. The Brahman is, therefore, said to be that being which is beyond description and characterisation. It is not accessible to words and the mind has to return back from it unsuccessfully without being able to grasp it.

In the advaita system a proposition contains an element of truth but it cannot be asserted. According to Śaṅkara all descriptive language is incomplete in meaning. Descriptive language takes the circuitous path of talking about one thing by talking of other things. Thus in advaita philosophy *anirvcaaniya* is the state where it is not possible to assert or deny a proposition. So the highest of absolute being eludes description.

The Mādhyamika philosophy contains the essence of Buddha's teaching and which again is difficult to comprehend. Both the Mādhyamikas and the Advaitins are in favour of some sort of Absolutism in philosophy. They seem to agree on the ultimate truth, be it Sūnyatā or Brahman. The ultimate truth, according to Nāgārjuna, cannot be grasped by language. Moreover, Nāgārjuna says, when 'emptiness' is comprehended all views become comprehensible, but when 'emptiness' is not comprehended all views become incompatible.<sup>2</sup> This ultimate truth of Mādhyamika philosophy cannot be comprehended and it cannot be described in language.

In fact, all phenomena are indeterminable and indefinable. It is asserted that this world of phenomena is neither real nor unreal but logically indeterminable and unjustifiable. Thus each phenomenon can neither be said to exist nor not to exist, nor both, nor either and hence it is inexpressible.

Since the ultimate is indescribable silence would be the best way to teach it or instruct it. The 'tathatā' is repeatedly described in *Mahāyāna Sūtra* as 'anaskāra', without letters or words. Nāgārjuna says (*Mādhyamika Kārikā*, 18.9) that the characteristic of

2. Matilal, B.K., *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, p. 151.

'Tatta' reality is free from conceptual construction and non-diversified by discursive thought of language. Chandrakirti argues that nirvāṇa or the ultimate reality is beyond Prapañca or linguistic construction. To him the ultimate is 'avacah' beyond speech and 'anaskāra' beyond letters.<sup>3</sup>

*Nyāyasūtra* has narrated that sense perception is, in principle, beyond description in language. It (1. 1.4) notes a view which says that things are usually designated by words in our language and our conception of each thing occurs along with the word; without such a designating word to go with our conception, verbalization and hence communication through language would be impossible.

The indeterminate (nirvikalpa) or non-qualificative perception is devoid of names, class concepts etc. Bare sensation or simple apprehension is the non-qualificative perception. An unqualified perception cannot be verbalised properly because no property appears as qualifying it. A qualified bare entity cannot be expressed by a word. This non-qualificative perception is neither true nor false. According to Gaṅgeśa, the non-qualificative cognition is beyond assignment of any truth value. William James calls it 'raw unverballed experience'.<sup>4</sup>

A simple property cannot be analysed into other properties. A simple property or a simple object can appear as a cognitive state without needing a further qualifier to qualify it. Thus, a non-qualificative perception is the perception of the simple property, which becomes indescribable. So also the substratum as long as it does not become the qualificand, is not verbalised.

Lastly, I have analysed Jaina Syādvāda where my emphasis is mainly on the Judgment of Syādavaktavya e.g. X is inexpressible. It holds all knowledge to be relative. All our judgments are necessarily relative, conditional and limited. It emphasises the extremely complex nature of reality and its indefiniteness. If we

3. Nāgārjuna, *Mūlhyamika Karikā*, 189.

4. Sharma, C.D., *A critical survey of Indian Philosophy*, p. 7

affirm or deny both existence and non-existence simultaneously to any thing, the thing becomes indescribable.

In Chapter III, I have discussed the scientific and psycho-religious analysis of mysticism. Mysticism plays a great role in the field of religious language. Mystics feel that language is inadequate or even wholly useless as a means of communicating their experiences. The first type of mystical experience is the pre-verbal or non-verbal sensory experience of infantile memories, which is called the 'oceanic feeling'. The second type of mystical experience is 'too complex' or too much out of the ordinary way to be verbalized. The third type is called the 'trained-transcendent' mystical experience. This experience is not empty or blank but is too intense.

Wittgenstein's famous concept of 'das mystiche' appears in propositions 6.52, 6.44, and 6.45 of the *Tractatus*. 'There is indeed the inexpressible, this shows itself, it is the mystical (T 6.52)'.<sup>5</sup> I have discussed the relation between Russell's mysticism and Wittgenstein's 'das mystiche'. Wittgenstein maintained that the unutterable is contained in what has been uttered. The unutterable for him is made manifest in the utterance. One may utter, but does not convey any sense ; that is the ineffable in the utterance of words.

Wittgenstein says that a proposition can express nothing of what is higher. Thus religion, ethics, art are like metaphysics which is concerned with what cannot be said, that which transcends the world.<sup>6</sup> Thus I believe that mysticism is one of the most significant and crucial aspects of Wittgenstein's early thought, and is of profound philosophical importance. It also has been argued that 'das mystiche' is used by Wittgenstein in more than one sense.

The metaphysical doctrine of Plato's theory of Ideas, like Wittgenstein's reality is outside time and space, because it is

5. Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus logico Philosophicus*, 6.52.

6. I *bid*, T 6.42.

unchangeable and external. Plato's picture of Universe is real, stable and eternal. The world perceived by our senses is not the real world, it is influx, appearance, illusion. The relationship between the supersensible world of ideas and the visible world of material things is explained in Plato's Dialogue. This supersensible world of Plato is something mystical and that cannot be expressed like Wittgenstein's 'das mystische'. I have observed the similarity of Plato's and Wittgenstein's concept of Philosophy. Like Plato and Wittgenstein, Paul Tillich has faced the same problem of language in religion. He holds that theological doctrines symbolize about which nothing can be said literally. Tillich is insisting that we do not use human language literally or univocally, when we speak of the ultimate. Because our terms can only be derived from our own finite human experience, they cannot be applied to God.

God is the central issue in the philosophy of religious language. Here I have discussed the issue whether 'God' is a proper name or not. Some philosophers and theologians have considered 'God' to be proper name. If we accept this view that 'God' is a proper name, then we have to specify what the bearer of the name is and this is impossible. Secondly, if we consider 'God' as proper name, then one may put a question like, when did God come into existence? And how long has God been existing? etc. But those are not sensible questions.

Then the next question is whether 'God' can be used as descriptive predicable term. If we take 'God' as a descriptive predicable term like 'men', then it will be predicated of several individuals, which is not the fact. In addition to that if we accept that 'God' is descriptive predicable then 'God exists' would be possible logically and empirically. But it is not the case. Thus either 'God' is not a proper name nor a descriptive predicative term but an abstract term.

So far as the problem of existence of God is concerned, I have given the analytical approach and mainly discussed the ontological argument for the existence of God. Here I have analysed

the problem in its four factors viz., (1) Meaningfulness, (2) Empirical atheism ; (3) Empirical theism and (4) Neo-classical theism.

Next I have made an attempt to discuss the nature of Moral Language. Here my discussion is generally confined to the Emotive theory, Emotive theory meaning and Concept of God. In addition to this I have briefly focussed upon the Indian notion of ethical language in an appendix.

Wittgenstein says in his *Tractatus* that ethics cannot be expressed in language, because it is transcendental. In my discussion I consider the problem of how moral language is connected to the language that we employ to describe the world.

In the emotive theory, the expressing of emotion by means of word with emotive meaning is emphasised. One of the problems in emotive sentences is to understand the nature of emotion. What is an emotion ? Here I use the word 'emotion' very widely to cover all our feelings.

The emotive theory of ethics is the view that the meaning of ethical sentences are primarily emotive. The only important and illuminating feature in the interpretation of ethical language is its emotive meaning. But ethical sentences cannot be understood in terms of descriptive meaning. Some emotivists like A.J. Ayer claim that genuinely ethical sentences have no descriptive meaning at all. Stevenson concedes a certain descriptive meaning to ethical sentences. Since ethical sentences are not basically descriptive, they cannot be said to be either true or false. They do not have real objective validity.

Ethical terms cannot be defined by way of natural characteristics. If emotive meaning is defined positively then it does not follow that ethical sentences have emotive meaning simply because they do not have descriptive meaning. The meaning of ethical sentences is primarily emotive rather than descriptive. But I have taken attempt to observe that ethics is purely emotive, thus its feeling cannot be properly expressed in words.

Emotive meaning is a meaning in which the response is a range



of emotions.<sup>7</sup> In emotive meaning, emotions fall within the broader range of psychological responses that were specified for meaning in general. Every emotive sentence puts some emotion into words. In this sense the meaning of the sentence might be said to be emotional and the sentence to have emotionality.

Emotion widely covers all our feeling and attitude. The strength or weakness of an emotive sentence is a function of the intensity of the emotion put into words. For example, 'hurrah' may express vigorous emotion in the football game but elsewhere it may be attended by only the faintest echo of emotion. However, we do not get the proper sense out of these emotive terms.

In emotive language the meaning becomes complicated and sometimes it does not communicate any idea to the hearer. The so-called expression of emotive terms do not come under semantic rules. Emotive meaning is subjective and it touches the feeling and attitude of the person. All these feelings and attitudes, desires, moods etc. are the private factors of life. Thus in certain cases, emotional expressions do not say something conceptually. Once again it is clear that the uttering of a certain word results from a certain emotion or feeling is not a question of meaning, but rather psychological or biographical. To say that an expression has emotive meaning if it expresses the speaker's emotion is very inadequate.

Then I have analysed the concept of good from the standpoint of ethical language. Words such as 'good', 'right', 'ought' are so fundamental in ethics that there are no other words by means of which to define them. I have made an attempt to explain the concept of good and show how it becomes indefinable and inexpressible according to Plato, Kant, Hume, Moore and Wittgenstein.

Plato's idea of good is the highest idea. This highest idea which is supreme over all others, and which is the ultimate absolute reality, becomes the ground of all other ideas. This highest idea of the good is indefinable and incommunicable.

7. Stevenson, C.L., *Ethics and Language*, p. 59.

God is identical with the idea of good. The word 'God' is merely a figurative term for the ideas, which become inexpressible.

The moral good for Kant is identified with virtue or qualities. The moral good of all finite rational beings is the unqualified and unconditional end of the finite rational moral agent. This highest good (*Summun bonum*) cannot be adequately communicated to others.

In Hume's moral philosophy the rightness or goodness of conduct could not be perceived or established by reason. No doubt, moral judgments are based on sentiments and emotions. A moral theory of Hume is non-cognitivist. The ethical predicates like good, bad, right etc., itself indicate the meta-ethical interest of Hume. In the analysis of his concept good, he means that there is nothing in a thing or an action by virtue of which it may be said to be 'good'. There is a certain kind of emotion—the emotion of approval or disapproval, which it arouses. Thus moral predicates e.g., 'good' or moral judgments do not make any assertion about any matter of facts or relation of ideas.

G.E. Moore maintains that all ethical propositions are based on the notion of 'good'. What then is good? How is good to be defined? All these are the fundamental problems in Moore's ethics. If one asked what is good? the answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if one is asked, how is good to be defined? its answer is that it cannot be defined.<sup>8</sup>

Moore explains that 'good' has no definition because it is a simple notion and has no parts, just as yellow is a simple notion, that just as you cannot by any manner of means explain what yellow is so you cannot define what good is.<sup>9</sup> Only a complex thing can be defined. Prof. Sidwick also stated that 'good is an

8. Moore, G.E., *Principia of Ethica*, p. 56.

9. *Ibid*, p. 9.

unanalysable' notion.

Lastly I have analysed the concept of good in Wittgenstein's philosophy. According to Wittgenstein what is good and evil is essentially the I, not the world [*Note Book* 58 (6)]. Since goodness and badness cannot be qualities of the world, they must be the qualities of the willing subject. When it is asked what do good and evil mean Wittgenstein tells us in the *Note Book* 'simply the happy life is good the unhappy bad'.<sup>10</sup>

Ethical attributes (values) are not facts, according to Wittgenstein. If there is value, it must lie outside the world (T 6.41) Ethical propositions do not state facts or do not state what happens to be the case. These propositions purport to say something higher than ordinary descriptive propositions.

Wittgenstein says in 6.421 of the *Tractatus* that ethics cannot be expressed, because it is transcendental. He states that whoever tried to write or talk ethics or religion would run against the boundaries of language. Because our ordinary language is not properly suitable to the ethics.

In the Indian notion of ethical language (Appendix I) I have touched the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagvadgītā and Purāṇas. According to Sri Aurobindo, the language of Veda is itself Sruti, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard. In Upanishads we observe certain words viz., Prāṇa, Jyotics, Brahman, Ātman, Ānanda etc. which are not describable. In Bhagvadgītā we observe the Avyakta Brahman or the Unmanifest which is indescribable too.

In art and feeling I have analysed Dewey, Langer, Prall and Bergson of the Chapter 'Analysis of Aesthetic Language'.

Dewey says that language cannot reproduce the feelings the works of art express and evoke, and Mrs. Langer says that language cannot give us insight into or knowledge of feelings whereas works of art can. Dewey emphatically stated that if all feeling could be named, if all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, if the forms of feeling and the forms of

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10. Wittgenstein, L., *Note-Book*, 307 (6).

discursive expression were logically commensurate, then there would be no reason for works of art to exist at all. It would seem to follow that all feelings cannot be named, that the forms of feeling and the forms of discursive expression are logically incommensurate, that all meaning cannot be adequately expressed by words. Mrs. Langer's and Prall's complaint is similar to Dewey's. All works of art, she says, express 'forms of feeling' they give us, 'insight into the nature of sentience'. Both Prall and Langer stated that language cannot name certain feelings. Prall's view shares much in common with this Bergsonian critique of language. They are agreeing on one point that language fails to represent reality. Thus language distorts reality while art does not. The emotion and feeling of art cannot be expressed in language.<sup>11</sup>

The work of art is a symbol of human feeling. The discursive and non-discursive symbol of Langer is a subjective experience, emotion, feeling of the art. Particularly this non-discursive symbol of art is inexpressible. Thus what art expresses, according to Langer is not actual feeling but ideas of feeling.

Art is the expression of emotion and feeling. However, the expression involves two factors. One is the expression of art and other is the expression of the artist. Here I am distinguishing art from the artist. But feeling and emotion which are the necessary elements of art cannot be expressed by the artist. Secondly, a piece of art also does not express properly its meaning and ideas. Thus both the art and artist are inexpressible to certain extent.

The other aspect of art is intuition. Art is the vision of intuition. For Croce, art being intuition, has no definite conceptual content. The artistic expression becomes the inner speech and not external utterance. Aesthetic experience is no doubt personal and private. Hence it cannot be communicated.

11. Kennik, W.F., 'Art and ineffable', *The Journal of Philosophy* 1961, Vol. 58, p. 309.

In the transcendental aesthetic, I have made attempt to discuss Kant, Hegel and Wittgenstein.

Kant has dealt his aesthetic experience in his *Critique of Judgment*. This judgment is the faculty of feeling. Aesthetic experience, according to Kant, is experience of harmony between free imagination and free understanding.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Kant is concerned with the principles of *a priori* in his critique of judgment. Aesthetic is the science of sensible knowledge. It does not represent the thing as it is. It gives us appearance only, the phenomenal world is not real world. The content of the world is beyond our experience, which cannot be analysed or expressed.

In transcendental aesthetic we observe two kinds of *a priori* knowledge e.g. space and time, which Kant called the forms of intuition. Space and time are prior to our experience, indeed they make experience possible.<sup>13</sup> Aesthetic is transcendental philosophy based on *a priori* principles. No definite thought or concept can adequately represent a creation of aesthetic (free) imagination. Kant's four moments of aesthetic e.g. quality, quantity, relation and modality are disinterested, subjective, non-representative and non-conceptive respectively.

Aesthetics means, to Hegel, the science of sensation of feeling. The art is the sensuous presentation of Absolute. According to Hegel Absolute is the sources of all things in the world. Art is essentially made for man's apprehension and in particular is drawn more or less from the sensuous field. Art is the presentation of truth or spiritual reality in a sensuous form. Art has meaning and it reveals something transcending our everyday experience. But what that meaning and revelation is, cannot be expressed otherwise than by the work of art itself.

Like ethics, Wittgenstein has shown a keen interest in aesthetics. In *Tractatus* 6.421 he says 'Ethics and aesthetics are one'.<sup>14</sup>

12. Bernard, J.H. (tr) Kant—*Critique of Judgment*, p. 30.

13. Mayer, F., *History of Modern Philosophy*, p. 297.

14. Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, 6.421

The language of ethics and aesthetics are on the same level. Both the subjects are transcendental, and they are used in an absolute sense. For any absolutistic usage of concepts like 'the beautiful', 'the good' etc. cannot be translated into any particular empirical sense. Music, art and poetry which impress us greatly, we still do not know how to analyse this impression—it is indescribable. Hence the propositions of ethics and aesthetic concerned with what cannot be said, because they do not state facts.

In the Appendix II, I have considered the Indian notion of aesthetics. Here I have considered both advaita Vedānta and Viśiṣṭadvaita views of aesthetics.

Brahman (Reality) is essentially beautiful and blissful. Beauty is, to Śaṅkara, an appearance of Brahman or Absolute. Ultimate reality is sat, cit and ānanda.

Rāmānuja expounds his system 'tattava', 'hita, and 'pūruṣārtha' in the study of aesthetics. In the Indian notion of aesthetic, also there is problem of inadequacy of language, which is mainly discussed by the Indian aestheticians e.g. Ānanda-Vardana, Abhinavagupta and Prof. Barlingay.

In my chapter on Philosophy of Language, I have discussed the problem of private language, problem of communication and three most important propositions of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

The notion of a private language, according to Wittgenstein is that it is understood by one person. By a private language is meant that no one other than the speaker could understand it.<sup>15</sup> According to the Cartesian view all sensations, feelings and psychological states are private.

Private language includes not only sensation but everything that has been called a mental act. Wittgenstein says in his *Philosophical Investigations* that someone who attempted to use language in this private way would not merely be unable to communicate his meaning to others but would have no meaning to communicate even to himself, he would not succeed in saying

15. Jones, O.R., (ed.) *Private Language Argument*, p. 230.

anything at all. Wittgenstein says that 'although you cannot tell me exactly what happens inside you, you cannot nevertheless tell me something general about it. By saying e.g. that you are having an impression which cannot be described.'<sup>16</sup> I have analysed the private language arguments of Wittgenstein, Russell, Ayer, Malcolm Castaneda, Rhees, Harvey and Thomas and come to the conclusion that our private experience is incommunicable.

Then I have analysed the problem of communication. How it is possible to communicate our ideas? How can we make ourselves understand by means of language? And how two persons are using same meaning to a particular word? According to Schlick, understanding and meaning are quite independent of content.

The peculiar experience of a person on looking at a green leaf is internally private and can never be accessible to any one else. It is inexpressible and defies all attempts to communicate it. In this way Schlick comes to the conclusion that every quality has a certain logical structure. Only structure can be communicated and that the content is indescribable.

There are three kinds of meanings in our communication. viz., (1) Utterance meaning, which is referred to a particular situation and its use etc.; (2) sentence meaning e.g. the grammars, rules and meaning of words; (3) Mental meaning which is the subjective affairs of the person. Thus when we communicate one statement, we become confused overlapping and criss-crossing with each other and as a matter of fact this gives rise to an indefinite and indistinct meaning.

Normative and subjective values, emotions and feelings are inadequately communicated. One may feel pain but it is not possible exactly to communicate his feeling of pain to others.

Then I have interpreted Wittgenstein's three propositions (T 5.6), (A 12.12) and (7) of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's proposition 'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world'

16. Ibid, p. 233.

(T 5.6), here he identifies the limits of one's language with the limits of one's self. The use of 'my language' and 'my world' implicitly introduce the notion of solipsism. In solipsism only one's own self and what one experiences exist which cannot be described.

The second proposition 'What can be shown, cannot be said' (T 412.12). In one sense it means what they 'show', in another they cannot say what they 'show'. Showing of what can be 'shown' and said is an 'external' showing whereas showing of what can only be 'shown' but not said is an internal showing. Thus the internal structure of reality can only be shown by language, not described in sentences. According to Wittgenstein, what is shown is mystical, and cannot be put into words.

In the third proposition, 'what we cannot speak about we must consign to silence (T 7).

Silence, in the Wittgensteinian sense is not complete silence or not uttering any sound. It means simply that we do not try to say what cannot be said. Thus silence is not ineffable or complete lack. Wittgenstein's inexpressible doctrine which is really important, cannot be said but only shown. The subject matter which ethics, aesthetics, religion, which are higher cannot be expressed in ordinary language.

### 7.1 General concluding remarks

Firstly, I think the 'inexpressible' means inadequate expression or communication, but not complete silence. This idea is related to the idea of the indistinct and indefinite. Thus an idea is inexpressible in the sense that it is not adequately, completely and exactly expressed through our language. One can take any fact or object, that is expressed to a certain extent and rest of it remains inexpressible. And the portion of it which is expressed is also inadequate. In other words sometimes we utter certain things which do not convey any sense and meaning and that too is inexpressible. Utterances without a definite meaning are not language. We cannot give proper meaning or state the



entire innumerable characteristics to a fact because of our limited vocabulary and language. Besides, in philosophy there are certain things which are non-sense, absurd, ambiguous, complicated where our expression is bound to be inadequate. Again due to poverty of our vocabulary we cannot express what we wish to express. So also our language does not move with the same speed as our thought moves. There are certain gaps in language and communication too. Sometimes we do not find the right words to express a thing. Here we may say that 'the language goes on holiday' or it may be misconception of language.

One may put a question that how can we express the inexpressible? But so far the ideas of inexpressible are concerned, this question does not arise or not applicable. Because I have not considered the inexpressible from an ordinary or narrower way. A thing is neither absolutely expressed nor absolutely nonexpressed but sometimes it is both expressed and nonexpressed from different points of view. Thus there is no contradiction.

Secondly the idea of inexpressible is not inconsistent. Let us analyse on the light of Joseph Bochenski's theory of the Un-speakable (Logic of Religion, p. 32) in the following.

Let us write "In (X,Y) for 'X' is an inexpressible object in the language 'Y' and let us consider first, the formula : 1.  $(\exists X, L) \text{ In } (X, L)$

It is asserted without inconsistency and obviously the formula is true by elementary laws of Logic. For it is very easy to find an object X and a language L which satisfy In (X, L).

Let us now universalize and consider the formula (2)  $(L) \text{ In } (O, L)$ , where 'O' is a constant. This seems to be a far more serious matter, namely, here it is asserted that O is inexpressible in any language. In other words, the statement (2) is stated to be the first grade metalanguage. If this is so the inexpressible idea does not entail any obvious inconsistency. No serious objection can be formulated against it from the standpoint of general logic and methodology.

## APPENDIX I

### Indian notions of ethical language (Ref. to Ch. IV)

Indian ethical systems are built on the foundation of metaphysics and Indian doctrines and symbols all invest morality with a rich transhuman meaning. Man derives value and norms not from the world stuff nor from the cosmic process, but from within his self and its relation to otherselves and to the cosmos.

Hindu ethics which is mainly concerned with Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavadgītā and Purāṇas are highly subjective.

In the *Rigveda* the main ethical idea is Tapas. The first meaning of the word 'tapas' is heat, or fervour of devotion. This tapas leads to the reward of heaven, which become the matter of realisation.

Here is another striking passage, in which we get the position of reality which is confusing (*Rigveda* 1-89-10)

'The Divinity is the Heaven.

The Divinity is the mid-region.

The Divinity is the Mother.

The Divinity is the Father, the son.

The Divinity is all Dieties.

The Divinity is the five-classed men.

The Divinity is all that is born and will be born.'

Although here we get the essence of Vedānta philosophy e.g. '*Tattvamasi*' or '*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman*' still then like Brahman, here Divinity is indescribable or Anirvachaniam. Rest of the Vedas are similar from the ethical stand-

point of view. The sages have certain experience of Vedas which cannot be interpreted in terms of the senses; before which the mind is restless, unable to comprehend. It is not possible to reduce the experiences to word or thought.

The Veda is thus rightly regarded as 'Apavresseya' Vedic truth, is non-personal truth. Sri Aurobindo says "The language of Veda is itself sruti, a rhythm not composed by the intellect, but heard, a divine word that came vibrating out of the infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for impersonal knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The problem of the Upanishads is not primarily that of human conduct. It is the widest and most fundamental philosophical problem that of the nature and meaning of reality, reality which is Brahman, that is stated in *Kenopanishad* in terse paradoxical language. It says : He who does not conceive it—to him it is known, he who conceives it—he does not really know. It is not really understood by those who understand it, it is really understood by those who do not understand it.<sup>2</sup> From the above lines it seems that Reality (Brahman) cannot be described.

Regarding 'good' and 'pleasant' it is mentioned in the *Kathopanishad* that the good is one thing, the pleasant is another; these two, having different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good; he who chooses the pleasant misses his end.<sup>3</sup> Here how a person choosing 'pleasant' 'misses his end' that cannot be expressed.

Thus in the Upanishads, we observe the ineffable experience to which they give different times as Prāṇa, Jyotiś, Ākāśa, Brahman, Ātmān, Ānanda etc.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is above all a lesson in the cultivation and perfection of the poise between the mystical and the activistic aspects of human life. It reflects the same Veda-Vedānta—blend, so characteristic of the heritage of Hinduism. The very setting

1. Seshadri, K., *Voice of Samanvaya* 'The heritage of Hinduism', p. 8.

2. Sharma, D.S., *Kenopanishad*, P. 37.

and circumstances, in which the Gītā is born and takes shape, would in itself reveal both these aspects. Its approach is, indeed, neither wholly transcendental nor exclusively empirical. But its transcendental part is that which cannot be expressed in language (Wittgenstein).

In *Bhagvad Gītā* (Chapter VIII 20.21 and Chapter XII.5) we also observe the Avyakta Brahman or the unmanifest which is indescribable.

Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari in his brief work, *The Ethical Philosophy of the Gītā* points out that the supreme value of the Gita as the song of the Lord is 'The role of harmony that it strikes in dealing with the fundamental problems of the Philosophers of nature, spirit and God'. "The Gītā Philosophy of conduct follows the *a priori* road from Prakṛti to Puruṣa and Puruṣottama, and then deduces the lower from the higher and takes its cue from the analysis of the chief factors of conduct viz., 'Adhithana' or the bodily locus. 'Kartā' or the moral and spiritual agent and 'daivam' or divinity.<sup>4</sup>

Thus in the vast areas of Hindu ethics e.g., Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gītā and Purāṇas contain the ideas of inexpressibility.

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4. Seshadri, K., *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

## APPENDIX II

### Indian notions of aesthetic language (Ref. to Ch. V).

In Indian philosophy we do see the notion of inexpressibility of aesthetics.

Let us analyse the realistic aesthetics of Sāṃkhya and the idealistic aesthetics of Vedānta. According to Sāṃkhya system, Nature is beautiful. But the nature at all times is not pleasurable to all. Vedānta, being optimist, says that everything is beautiful and delight. But ordinarily we are too dull to perceive the beauty of the universe. Brahman is consciousness, bliss. Bliss and beauty are identical because in Brahman experience there is no distinction of aesthetic object and aesthetic delight. Beauty and truth, bliss add consciousness constitute the very essence of Reality. Thus the ultimate reality is both truth and beauty. In other words, Reality is sat, cit, ānanda. This is thought in several vedāntic texts. Thus Sāṃkhya's nature and Vedānta's Brahman which is only the original source of all beauty cannot be expressed in ordinary words.<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja as a Viśiṣṭadvaitin expounds his system under three heads, namely tattava, hita and puruṣārtha. This method may with profit be adopted in the study of aesthetics as well. The tattava or truth aspect of aesthetic philosophy deals with the nature of Brahman as the supremely beautiful self which is the source of the beauties of nature and the soul of man. The hita are means of realising. The beauty of Brahman or *Bhūbaṇa Sundara* is the cultivation of love for Brahman which

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1. Mahadevan, T.M.P., *The Philosophy of Beauty*, p. 3.

arises as a result of its infinite attractiveness. The *puruṣārtha* or the chief aim of life is the attainment of the eternal bliss of Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly Indian aestheticians like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta in the works of their aesthetic, '*Abhinava bhārati*', '*Dhvanya lokalocana*' and '*Dhvanyaloka*' discuss the problem of inadequacy of language.

Ānandavardhan drew attention to the inexpressible qualities of a good poem. The essence of poetry he held, lay how aptly they were presented, but in the emotional mood the poem could arouse. Consequently he drew attention to a work that lent it beauty, but an intangible inexpressible quality given to it by the suggestive power of the words. This inexpressible suggestive quality called *dhvani* cannot be analysed scientifically nor explained in ordinary psychological terms since the feeling aroused by it is not an actual one.

Indian theories of *Rasa* and *Bhāva* which are the aesthetic emotion and feelings evoked by the work of art become transpersonal. These '*rasa*' and '*bhāva*' cannot be expressed in language. Prof. S.S. Barlingay in his article 'Some concepts in Bhārata's theory of drama' holds that the *rasa* leads successively to *sihahibhava*, the artistic beauty, by the pleasure of the spectator and culminates in the indescribable artistic enjoyment or the least of the *daiviki sidhi*. Most poetic critics since the time of Abhinava think that *rasa* is the state of indescribable artistic enjoyment.<sup>3</sup>

Besides, Bhārata classifies *rasas* into eight types viz., *Śringāra* or love, *Hāsyā* or humour, *Karunā* or pathos, *Raudra* or anger, *Vīra* or heroism, *Bhayānaka* or the fearful or terrible, *Bhībhatṣa* or the grotesque and disgusting and *Adbhuta* or marvellous. All these forms of *rasa* are such that cannot be clearly des-

2. Srinivasachari, P.N., *The Philosophy of Beautiful*, p. 83.

3. Indian Institute of Advanced Study Simla, *Indian aesthetics and Art activity*, p. 24 (Dr. Barlingay's article, 'Some concepts in Bhārata's theory of drama').

cribed in word.<sup>4</sup>

In Hindu aesthetic the art may be divided as Kāma, Līlā, Māyā, Yoga, Anubhava and Sāadhanā.

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4. Srinivasachari, P.N., *The Philosophy of Beautiful*, p. 81.

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